



The Voice of Truth

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Lack of Knowledge By Jimmy Pettigrew

God had a controversy with his people because there was no knowledge of Him in the land. *"Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land" (Hosea 4:1).* The basis for destruction was the lack of knowledge. *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6).*

It was not that knowledge was not available, but that they had rejected it and it is seen as a rejection to God! Indeed, knowledge is priceless! *"Receive my instruction, and not silver; And knowledge rather than choice gold" (Proverbs 8:10).* The knowledge of the ways of God is always a greater possession than material wealth like silver and gold. The things of God are always best for us. Thus, only *"fools hate knowledge" (Proverbs 1:22).* But, *"Wise men lay up knowledge" (Proverbs 10:14).* *"For wisdom shall enter into thy heart, And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul" (Proverbs 2:10).* *"For wisdom is a defence, even as money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom preserveth the life of him that hath it" (Ecclesiastes 7: 12).*

God intended that knowledge play a vital role in the lives of His people. We are to be (1) *"filled with all knowledge" (Romans 15:14; Colossians 1:9).* We are to abound in knowledge (2 *Corinthians 8:7).* We are (2) *grow in knowledge (2 Peter 3: 18; Colossians 1:10).* Knowledge is one of the (3) *Christian virtues we are to add to our lives (2 Peter 1:5-11).* In fact, God places such a premium on knowledge that the word "knowledge" itself is the key word of one of the epistles - **2 Peter**. In fact, God places - such a premium on knowledge that He told Israel that (4) He desired *"Knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (Hosea 6:6).*

How is your knowledge of God's Word? "Can you prove when and where the church was established? Where is Jesus' sermon on the new birth found in the New Testament? Who was the first Gentile convert? Who accompanied Paul on his first missionary tour? A test was conducted with a freshman class at a College Bible department, in which 91% of those who took the examination were members of the church. Some of the results obtained from this test are interesting.

- (1) 33% of the students did not know that Jonah was a prophet who was on a ship bound for Tarshish and 33% did not know he preached in Nineveh.
- (2) 17% did not know **Romans** was the sixth book in the New Testament.
- (3) 31 % did not know that **Jude** follows **3 John**.
- (4) 55% did not know who wrote **2 Timothy**.
- (5) 45% did not know who wrote **Revelation**.
- (6) 21 % did not know that Isaiah wrote **Isaiah**.

CONTINUED INSIDE...

- (7) 56% did not know that Luke wrote **Acts**.
- (8) 20% did not know that Lydia sold purple.
- (9) 92% did not know that Christ's conversation with Nicodemus on the new birth is found in the gospel of **John**.
- (10) 87% did not know from which cities Moses sent the spies out against Canaan.

Let us notice some of the curses and tragedies of ignorance. (1) Ignorance was one of the sins which crucified Jesus (**Acts 3:17; Luke 23:34; 1 Corinthians 2:8**). (2) Ignorance alienates one from the life of **God (Ephesians 4:18)**. (3) Ignorance precipitates the establishment of one's own righteousness (**Romans 10:3**). (4) Ignorance causes the individual to err (**Matthew 22:29; 2 Peter 3:1-9; Acts 17:29-30**). (5) Ignorance leads people to wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (**2 Peter 3:16**). (6) Ignorance causes people to be destroyed (**Hosea 4:6; Isaiah 5:13**). (7) Ignorance will keep one from being converted scripturally (**Matthew 13:15**). (8) Ignorance will cause people to ultimately be lost (**2 Thesalonians 1:7-10; Acts 17:30-31**).

With ignorance prevailing as it does among members of the body of the Lord, let us now read **Hosea 4:6** and tremble: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge. I will also reject thee."*

"Is There A Standard? (#2)"

By Jarrod Jacobs

That's your opinion." "Who are you to tell me what to do?" "Who is to say _____ is right or wrong?" "I see nothing wrong with it." These and other such statements are made by folks when they wish to justify their actions independent of any objective standard. Last week, we learned that there is an objective standard for life, God's word! It transcends all other standards (**Acts 5:29**), and by it we will be judged one day (**Jn. 12:48**). In this article, I wish to address some specific doctrines and practices which men try to justify by questioning whether or not there is an objective standard for our lives.

Baptism

For years, baptism has been a subject which folks denied as being necessary, or said that sprinkling water or pouring water on someone was the same as immersion in water. How can we know the truth? Who is to say that there is a "right" or "wrong" position for folks to take? Is there a standard that we can know and follow? Absolutely.

We learned last week that the true standard is God's word. Therefore, let us consult it, and see what God says on this subject. What does the Bible say about baptism?

It says that baptism is necessary for salvation (**Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16**). It says that baptism is necessary to "wash away sins" (**Acts 22:16**). Further, baptism is an immersion; for when men were baptized, they went down into the water and came up out of the water (**Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:38-39**). **Colossians 2:12-13** teaches us this truth quite simply by saying, *"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."*

Marriage

We live in an age where marriage is being redefined to include homosexuals, multiple partners, and the like. Many say, "Those people are in love. You have no right to judge them." Others have made the claim that the marriage arrangement may be "different" from

mine, but it has no effect on my marriage. If it is true that the marriage arrangement and its “definition” are inventions of man, then we certainly have the right to change them as we see fit. Is this true, though? Is there an objective standard defining and describing marriage? There is!

As early as **Genesis 2**, we read about the first marriage. At this time, Eve was brought to Adam, and presented to him as his wife. He said, *“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”* (**Gen. 2:23-24**). From this point forward, marriage was defined as the joining of one man and one woman for life. Yes, we know there were people in Bible times who failed to appreciate and follow God’s plan, just as there are people like this today, but *“from the beginning”*, God expected one man and one woman to be married, making a commitment for the rest of their lives (**Matt. 19:4-6; Rom. 7:2-3**). Let us respect God’s standard. When we do this, our “divorce rates” will diminish. When we do this, our home lives will improve, because we know we are committed to one another; and are then committed to work out the difficulties and problems as they arise.

The Church

This is yet another area of life where men have thrown away the standard. Men often say, “Join the church of your choice.” We hear that God endorses all religious bodies. In fact, some folks will go so far as to say that God is in all religious bodies. Is there a standard for the church? Has God approved all bodies, or has He made a choice in this matter? He definitely has made a choice!

First, let us begin by seeing that God *“is not the author of confusion, but of peace...”* (**I Cor. 14:33a**). So, He cannot endorse nor approve all the various religious bodies who teach conflicting doctrines. That is contrary to the nature of peace. Also, when we investigate the standard, God’s word, we find that Christ promised to build His church, and not man’s (**Matt. 16:18**). If it is His church that He approves, then He certainly cannot approve the churches founded by men. Therefore, someone encouraging us to join the church of our choice, is encouraging us to do something that God does not want us to do! When I open my Bible, I learn that when I do something that God does not want me to do, it is sin (**Jas. 4:17; I Jn. 3:4**). Therefore, it is sin when folks try to get us to change God’s standard on the subject of the church. There is but one church approved by God, the church purchased with the blood of Christ (**Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16**). This is clear.

Righteous Living

Man tells us to “look out for #1” in this life. We are rarely encouraged to do anything for anyone if it will not benefit us. This is seen even in the bearing of children. We live in a time in which if one deems it is not the “right time” for children, or if we simply do not wish to raise a child, then society encourages us to kill that child while still in the womb! Oh, the selfishness manifested in this world. Some ask, “Who gave you the right to make such judgments?” God’s word judges — it is the standard!

When we read the pages of the Bible, we see how we ought to live. God says, *“Be ye holy for I am holy”* (**I Pet. 1:16**). He also said, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”* (**Heb. 12:15**). That is blunt, isn’t it? Let us pay attention. By living holy, it means living a righteous life wherein we are “set apart” (the definition of holy, JJ) for service to God. Christ does not encourage selfishness, but selflessness! Jesus told us to treat others the way we want to be treated (**Matt. 7:12**). Also, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (**Matt. 22:39**). Righteous living demands this attitude in us. Work so we may give to others (**Eph. 4:28**). Speak kindly (**Eph. 4:29, 32**). *“...Do justly, ... love mercy,*

and ... walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. 6:8; Deut. 10:12).

Let us thank God for His standard! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com*

The Cares of This Life

By Jonathan L. Perz

Of all the things that distract us from Christian service, the simple "cares of this life" typically cause us the greatest trouble. In two different places, Jesus recognized the struggle we would have.

In the Parable of the Sower Jesus said there would be seed sown which would fall among thorns. That seed symbolizes those who hear the word and go out, but are choked with "cares, riches and pleasures of life" and as a result bring no fruit to maturity (**Luke 8:14**). We often focus solely on the "riches and pleasures of this life" aspect of the passage, but fail to recognize that the simple "cares of this life" play a significant role as well in keeping us from being as fruitful as we could be.

In another passage, Jesus warned the disciples to take heed. In light of His inevitable return, Jesus reminded the disciples about being weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and "cares of this life" to the point that the Day of the Lord would come upon them unexpectedly (**Luke 21:34**). The Lord warns that we watch and pray always that we are counted worthy to escape these things that will come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man (**Luke 21:36**). We might not have issues with carousing or drunkenness, but we all have cares in this life. Are those cares causing us to take our eyes off of that which is truly important. The reality is that the Day of the Lord will come upon the world as a snare, but it ought not be a snare for Christians who are taking heed to the type of life they are living.

The crux of both of these passages is that the "cares of this life" can cripple our faith to the point that we remain immature, become unfruitful and be counted unworthy. Let us therefore "take heed" and evaluate our priorities carefully. *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com*

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17