

COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH (THROUGH EDUCATION)

Last issue we began to study the thought in 2 Timothy 3:7 that it is possible to be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." We considered four steps in the process of developing real spiritual knowledge - education, meditation, participation, and evaluation. Each of the four steps was discussed in general terms. This month let's look more in detail at the first of the steps - education.

First, consider why education should be on the bottom of the list of steps. Why should it be considered basic enough that the other steps build upon it? Because coming to the knowledge of the truth is all about acting like we **know** how we should act to please God. There's no more to it than that. And we simply cannot act any better than we **know** how to act. If we do, it is merely by accident, and no one will accidentally make it to heaven! So all our meditations and actions must have a basis of truth, and that basis comes through education.

Let's look at a few general observations about education:

Our God is a God of knowledge. In 1 Samuel 2:3, two opposing views of presenting knowledge are described. One presents knowledge, or rather presumed knowledge, in a proud and arrogant way. The other way, God's way, is to use knowledge to weigh the actions of men. In other words, some people merely **talk** a good game, but God judges how we **play** the game based on his knowledge of how we **should** be playing it.

We will learn best if in a spirit of fear. In Proverbs 1:7 we see that "*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*" Most of us have had the experience of cramming before a big test, burning the midnight oil in the fear of doing poorly. Imagine how hard we might study if we knew the Lord's final exit exam would be tomorrow for us!

All education is not beneficial. Education has been highly prized in my family, and I still have a thirst to learn, but I know that much knowledge is vain (Job 15:2). How can that be? If it is knowledge that does not get us toward our goal of heaven, it is vain. There are countless things to learn about the world, but only a relatively small handful will get us safely into the world to come.

Now let's move on to three powerful questions for each of us to answer individually.

Do you know as much as you need/want to know about the Bible? If you answer yes, is it because you know everything or just enough to have a feeling of false security? If you answer no then what are you doing about it? Are you relentlessly searching the Bible for treasures? Paul told Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15) to study to show himself approved unto God. But Paul didn't say how much study was enough. How much is enough for you?

Can you forget the tree of knowledge? OK, here's a test - true or false. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were to avoid the tree of good and evil. What's your answer? In Gen 2:9,17 we are told twice that it was not the tree of good and evil, but the tree of the **knowledge** of good and evil. A person that spends a lot of time in sin is going to have a lot of sinful knowledge to deal with. What's the best way to cancel sinful memory? Replace it with Godly knowledge. That's education!

What do you do when a sin of ignorance becomes a sin? Paul gave us the example (Romans 7:7) that he didn't know lust until the law said to him, "*You shall not covet.*" So when we realize we've been sinning in ignorance, it's not an ignorant sin any longer. In Old Testament times, a person would offer a special offering (Leviticus 4:23). Now in New Testament times, we gladly obey the second law of pardon (Acts 8:22, 23). What does this have to do with education? You decide - had you rather be learning about sin and examining your own life, making corrections and atonement according to Acts 8:22, 23, or just living in sin, doing the best you can instead of the best you **know**, and pleading ignorance on the judgment day?

Let's move on to a real life demonstration of the use and value of education. What can education do for us in a time of temptation? Look closely at what our Savior did:

"It is written"...about bread. (Matthew 4:1-4) Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. After praying and fasting for forty days the tempter came to him with a real simple request - turn stones to bread. But Jesus knew this was not the time and place to do something he would otherwise do to help others, so he refused (there's a great lesson here for us). But it is **how** he refused that teaches the greater principle. Jesus recalled a truth recorded way back in Deuteronomy 8:3 and replied, "*It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*" Wow! He

just said, *"It is written..."* and refused to be swayed from that truth. How many times would people deny their temptation if they only had the knowledge of a specific truth and command in their memory? That's the value of education!

"It is written"...about power. (Matthew 4:5-7) The devil was not done with Jesus yet. He tempted Jesus to make a public display of Jesus' power to be protected by angels. Again Jesus knew this was not the reason to do what he knew he could do, so he refused again. But the lesson to us is that Jesus once again went to the old scriptures (Deuteronomy 6:16) and said, *"It is written again, you shall not tempt the Lord your God."* Do you see a pattern?

"It is written"...about the world. (Matthew 4:8-11) OK, so the devil couldn't get to Jesus through his hunger or a desire for worldly glory, but what about just giving Jesus all the possessions in the world? That's the last temptation in this round. The devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would only worship the devil. Once again Jesus refused and used only one old great truth (Deuteronomy 6:13) and replied, *"...it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."* Again, Jesus used only one truth, yet he stood firmly on that one truth and never swayed. And what happened next? The devil left Jesus and angels came and ministered unto him. This is the best example of education that I know. Jesus' memory of great truths slammed the door on the devil and allowed Jesus the comfort of angels.

Jesus expects us to use the knowledge recorded in the Bible in our own lives, too. Here are five brief descriptions of examples for you to study:

- ▶ Mercy being better than sacrifice. In Matthew 12:3 Jesus said, *"...Have you not read what David did...?"*
- ▶ Marriage being for life. In Matthew 19:3-6 Jesus said, *"...Have you not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female...?"*
- ▶ Praise coming from children. In Matthew 21:14-16 Jesus said, *"...Have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you have perfected praise?"*
- ▶ Our state in heaven. In Matthew 22:23-32 Jesus ends a long questionable situation with *"...Have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God...God is not the God of the dead, but of the living?"*
- ▶ Christ's rejection and triumph. In Mark 12:10, 11 Jesus said, *"...Have you not read this scripture, The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner...?"*

In each of the five previous cases, Jesus referred to a previously recorded incident or fact for the truth he needed for each tempting question. But more than that, each time he sort of chastised his tempters for not using the same knowledge that was available to them. Does it scare you to think what Jesus might say to us, if he gave out life progress reports? It does me!

Let me leave you with one more benefit of studying hard to gain as much knowledge about the Bible as you can. Consider this question - can you think of two thoughts (good and evil) at the same moment? Not a split second apart, but the exact same moment? I don't think so, because even if you could the evil thought would make the good thought evil. Jesus says (Matthew 6:22, 23) that a little darkness of the eye makes the whole body dark, and Paul says (1 Corinthians 5:6) that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. So another great value of study is that it focuses the; mind's eye on good things while we are doing it, plus it keeps God's temptation-beating truths fresh in the memory where they can do us the most good.

Happy studying, and remember - YOU CANNOT DO BETTER THAN YOU KNOW TO DO!!

BILL PRINCE, JR.
Oxford, AL

APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Does I Corinthians 7:28-29 teach that divorced people have the right to remarry?

ANSWER: Questions surrounding divorce and remarriage are becoming more and more prevalent in the church today. Our culture has reached a point where marriage is no longer held in high regard or viewed as sacred. This has led many to live together as husband and wife without the covenant of marriage. It has led many to think that marriage is not only between men and women. Consequently we see a trend to push for legislation to redefine marriage to include those of the same sex. It has led many to seek quick and easy divorces.

All of the above views are beginning to make their way into the church. We are warned to not conform to this world but to be transformed. But not conforming takes tremendous fortitude. The only way to be transformed is to constantly renew our minds in the scripture.

Because of that mentioned above, we should not be surprised that when we read the scriptures we do so with certain presuppositions. We also have a tendency to conform to the practice and views of the world and thus fail in allowing this scripture to say what it says! With this introduction we will seek the proper interpretation of the passage mentioned above.

"Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if even if you marry, you have not sinned." (I Corinthians 7:27-28)

For many this passage is taken as a warning against divorce but if one does divorce they will not sin if they marry. The assumption made is that when Paul asks, "Are you loosed from a wife" that he is saying "Are you divorced?" Consequently he would be saying in verse 28 that it is not sin when divorced people remarry.

There are several reasons why this interpretation is not correct.

The first is that verse 25 begins Paul's discourse on a new issue concerning marriage. He writes,

"Now concerning virgins (ton parthenon): I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy."

With these words he begins a passage that deals with those who have not yet married. It should be noted that he has already dealt with divorced people in verses 10-16. There he instructs that husbands and wives are not to depart from one another. He continues by saying that if they do they are to remain unmarried or be reconciled. Paul would not at this point be teaching something contradictory to that which he had previously instructed. A flat statement that it is not sin for divorced people to be remarried in verse 28 would contradict verse 11 where he teaches us that those separated should remain unmarried!

Another point to be made is that of dealing with the words bound and loosed. The translators choose the word wife hence the suggestion is that the man is already married. However, in the Greek the word for wife is simply woman and may refer to a man's betrothed as well as his spouse. The context suggests that the reference is to a man's betrothed virgin and not a spouse. Therefore the words bound and loosed have reference to whether

one is betrothed or not. We should also note that the word loosed (luo) means free and is not a word that is used for divorced.

It is our understanding that verses 27-28 does not teach the right of a divorced person to remarry. It teaches that the betrothed virgins should consider remaining single but if they choose to marry they will not sin in doing so.

SAM DICK
Cave City, KY

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
May 6 – 11	Ashlock , KY Congregation Celina, TN	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
May 7 – 11	Van Lear Congregation Van Lear, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 14 – 18	Estesburg Congregation Eubank, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
May 21 – 25	Hopkinsville Congregation Hopkinsville, OH	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 25 – 27	New Bethel Congregation Cullman, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
May 25 – 27	Mt. Zion Congregation Crab Orchard, KY	Tommy Bulger (Prattville, AL) & Hunter Bulger (Greenville, AL)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. How many towns were given to the priests from the lands of the Israelites tribes?
2. According to Isaiah, in the day of victory, who will the Lord slay?

3. Who did Jesus say accuses the Jews?
4. The Corinthians were warned not to be "unequally yoked together" with whom?
5. Where was John when he received the revelation?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How long did Moses stay on the mountain? FORTY DAYS AND
FORTY NIGHTS (Exo. 24:18)
2. According to Solomon, how is a fool's voice known? BY
HIS MANY WORDS (Ecc. 5:3)
3. What did God provide for Jonah and then take away? A
GOURD FOR SHADE (Jonah 4:6-7)
4. In Romans, what relationship does Paul use to symbolize
the law's authority over the people? A WIFE TO HER
HUSBAND (Rom. 7:2-5)
5. Paul instructed the Colossians to share their letter with
which other church? LAODICEA (Col. 4:16)