

#120 “Develop a Mature Biblical Framework of Knowledge”

by Brent Barnett

www.relevantbibleteaching.com

Of all the shortcomings of the church in America, this one gives me the greatest concern. A lack of prayer does not make us completely vulnerable to destruction or assimilation. A lack of knowledge does. Of course, if we desire true revival, all of the elements must be at work. It is no mystery in the New Testament that there will be many false teachers who will infiltrate the circles of the church. It is no mystery that Satan will disguise himself as an angel of light to deceive the church. It is no mystery that we are to test the spirits to see if they are of the Lord. Knowledge, wisdom, and discernment are described as important spiritual gifts. God has given these for a reason. 1 Timothy 3:15 describes the church as "the pillar and support of the truth." If truth is made wishy-washy and spiritual knowledge exchanged for worldly wisdom, this support mechanism will be taken out. The pillar will fall and chaos and Satanic deception will rule supreme until God steps in and fixes the problem.

Francis Schaeffer described a belief in the inerrant, infallible, and inspired Word of God as the watershed issue for the church in America. Yet, a few decades later, a more subtle deception has come into play. It is not so much a struggle with liberalism and conservatism over the inerrancy of God's Word; rather, it is a struggle within the ranks of those who would call themselves committed to the authority of God's Word. **There is the temptation and trend to not teach the full counsel of God.** Theology is regarded as irrelevant to the every day needs felt by church attenders and "seekers." In fact, theology is minimized, and for many people it is of no interest whatsoever. The great and core doctrines of the faith are unknown to many Christians today. They have all the tools to get as much as they can out of this life, but they do not know doctrine. Nor are they as concerned as they ought to be about the life to come. Too many churches never give their people the opportunity to grow to a spiritual maturity in their knowledge of Christ because they never teach the difficult elements of Scripture, let alone the foundational doctrinal truths that are essential to distinguishing Christianity from other world religions. They don't even expect their people to know where the books of the Bible are, let alone where to find a verse when they need one. This trend away from teaching the full counsel of God and from arming God's people with truth is scary. In a day and age where Bibles are in the hand of nearly every man, woman, and child, Bible illiteracy and poor theology reign supreme. This is a disaster.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly." Not being able to receive God's truth because of living according to the flesh gives rise to serious sin issues, which the church at Corinth certainly was experiencing. People in the church were even living in incest. Today we see people become dependent upon their pastors or elders for truth and counsel. They can't overcome difficulty, speak out for God's faithfulness, or dispute with an unbeliever for truth because they do not know their Bibles. **We have trained people in relational skills**

and evangelistic strategies, but they don't know the message! They know about believing in Jesus and trusting in Him, but on many other items they fall short. Their lives are riveted with spiritual defeats. They were told that God was supposed to give them a wonderful life, so they have no capacity for processing through a heartbreak or crisis situation. God and His sovereignty over evil is an unknown to them.

We need a well-rounded Christian worldview, which cannot be had without an understanding of the full counsel of God. We need to understand how our faith impacts all of the areas of our lives, culture, and society. Most of all, we need to know our God. Without adequate knowledge, many in the professing church will be deceived. Scripture is given so that we will be "adequate, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). This takes knowledge, training, an investment of time and energy, and a persistent study of the Word of God. But if we skip the training and teaching, we will be unequipped to do good. The western church could be described as an army going to battle without being armed or armored. Many don't even know that they are in a battle. Revival will be impossible without a transmission of knowledge through the working of the Holy Spirit. Sound doctrine unifies and sustains the purity of the church over time. It is also essential for refining and reviving the church. We must become acquainted with our God, with His truth, and with His ways. Why would we want to remain infants in Christ when God has a feast of knowing Him prepared for us? Yet many are still babies in Christ, living and walking according to the flesh.

Hosea 4:1 begins with this indictment from God: "Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land." Hosea says that the Jewish people have so decayed in their understanding and worship of God that they don't even know Him or how to worship Him anymore. In verse 6, God continues, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." This is serious business. These people chose to reject knowledge, and God rejected them. Their lack of knowledge is what led to their destruction. Even their religious teachers and leaders had rejected knowledge. We can reject knowledge in a couple of ways. For one, we can choose to remain ignorant and not study the Word, being content to be fed the milk of the Word for our entire adult life. The second way we can reject knowledge is to exchange true spiritual knowledge for the impostor of worldly wisdom, which is foolishness before God. We will think of ourselves as having become wise when in reality we will have become fools. We need to learn from the Word. We are sanctified in the Word, for the word is truth (John 17:17).

John 8:31-32 says, "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'" Why are so many people in the church falling into sin or struggling to get out of Satanic temptations and traps? Perhaps it is because they do not have the resources to stand on their own two feet once they leave the Sunday service. We have got to lead people to God's freedom by giving them the truth. We want to be making disciples as the Great Commission has said: "Go therefore and make disciples of

all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus is not telling us to do whatever we can to get people to profess Christ and make a minimal commitment. Rather, He is commanding us to do all that we can by Christ's power to make disciples of men by teaching them the full counsel of God. Christ says to teach them all which He has commanded them. That is a lot to pass on. Sermonettes and preaching aimed only at the "seeker" will not get this done. Churches must be storehouses of knowledge and effective teachers of it. It is no wonder so many Christians doubt their own salvation, living their lives with uncertainty and instability. If we know the teaching of Christ and abide by it, we can know that we are His disciples. It is absolutely essential that we view the Bible as God's very words to us, without which we cannot learn, grow, and become mature like Christ.