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Will You Increase *in* Your Bible Knowledge This Year?



SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE, but it is nothing less. If you have ever wondered why I emphasize teaching the Word of God in the ministry at the capital, this week’s study will provide you with a persuasive answer. Imparting Bible knowledge (and praying that people will apply it) is the biblical formula for spiritual growth. There is no other way to mature, according to the Bible. Paul informed his understudy, Pastor Timothy, what he ought to emphasize in his ministry: **“Preach the word,”** he said (2 Timothy 4:2). It follows that every ministry leader needs to place a healthy emphasis on teaching the Bible. Why? Bible knowledge is the basic, irreplaceable ingredient for achieving spiritual growth. Proverbs 23:7 states, **For as [a person] thinks within himself, so he is,** echoes 27:19, **So the heart of man reflects man.** Do not be deceived about your spiritual maturity: Bible knowledge (and its application) is the only means for growth in Christlike-ness. You must first know the Word before you can obey it.

Read on, my friend!

Ralph Drollinger

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. *Refreshments Served.*
SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*
HOUSE: 7:30 AM Thursdays, The Capitol Hill Club. *Hot Breakfast Served.*

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The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study Sponsor.





★ PUBLIC SERVANT ENDORSEMENT

Don Bacon
U.S. Representative
Nebraska
2nd Congressional District



“Studying the Bible with Ralph and his wife, Danielle, is the highlight for me every week when I’m at the United States Capitol.

Paul told the Corinthians that he gave them “milk” and not “solid food” when he ministered to them. Ralph never serves milk in his studies but delivers a huge serving of steak! I say this literally as he does serve us steak each week, but more importantly, his Bible studies are the most spiritually and intellectually challenging I’ve participated in.

I know the book Oaks in Office will help many elected and appointed political leaders grow in their faith in Christ and will make better disciples in our national and state capitals. We need more lights shining bright and more ambassadors for Christ in government, and Oaks in Office will help many of our leaders get off the milk diets and eating solid foods!”

Will You Increase *in* Your Bible Knowledge This Year?

I. INTRODUCTION

Colossians 3:16 provides insight. It states:

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Ephesians 5:18–19 states the same as the above passage, but equates them with being filled with the Spirit:

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord ...

In that the consequential aspects of both *letting the word of Christ dwell within you* and being *filled with the Spirit* are the same, in accordance with syllogistic¹ reasoning, the above two are synonymous: both commands produce the same spiritual result. What does it mean to be *filled with the Holy Spirit*? Simply this: it is making sure the *Word of Christ richly dwells within you*. *Richly* is the Greek word *plousios*. It can also be translated “abundantly.” It follows then, that to the degree one invests time in the Word is the degree one will be overflowing with God’s Spirit, or spiritually mature.

Further, the similar meaning of these two seemingly unrelated commands of Scripture are also connected at the hip when you consider that the Holy Spirit comes to fill the believer at the point of salvation (Acts 1:8) and that *The word of God is living and active ...* (Hebrews 4:12). When you are filled with the Spirit-

it it also means that you are indwelt by the Word of God — and it is no wonder that what results from both are quite the same. Generally speaking, both commands are different ways of expressing the same thing.

There are those, however, who believe that shortcuts exist to spiritual maturation, shortcuts around knowledge of God’s Word. They are of the opinion that being spiritual has little to do with the discipline of learning, memorizing, and meditating on His Holy Writ. They counter with “Studying the Bible and gaining knowledge puffs one up, it makes one arrogant and leads to legalism.”² Certainly that can occur when the pursuit of scriptural knowledge lies outside the quest for personal holiness in a contrite journey to become more like Jesus.

One reason that is so dangerous is to avoid knowledge, the Scriptures teach, is to be *naïve* and *simple-minded*! According to the book of Proverbs, *simple-mindedness* is a form of foolishness. *“Fools hate knowledge”* states Solomon. In the end, such an attitude *“will destroy them”* (1:22, 29, 32b). Think about it this way: the human mind, given the noetic³ (intellectual) consequences of the Fall of man and the entrance of sin into the world in Genesis 3 requires scriptural reprogramming in order for one to think correctly. Proper programming, given our proclivity to slide back into improper thought patterns, means we need a lifetime commitment to the uptake of God’s Word.

Scripture teaches that one can only be as spiritually mature as one is knowledgeable of the Word of God — and obedient to that knowledge. It stands to reason one cannot obey that which they



do not know. Accordingly, knowledge is the precursor to spiritual maturity.

YOU ARE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT IN PROPORTION TO THE DEGREE YOU KNOW THE WORD AND OBEY IT

Therefore, serious Bible study is the biblical formula for serious spiritual growth! If you want God to use you mightily in office, then you need to pay the price of studying His Word! Beloved, do not follow spiritual leaders who themselves are *simpletons* who would rather check their minds at the door of Scripture. Allegiance to “spiritual leaders” who are “Scripture light” will produce weak, malnourished saints who lack spiritual fortitude and discernment — in a day and age when our country most needs in office strong men and women in Christ! God’s design is for pastor-teachers to be His delivery agents of Scripture (cf. Romans 10:14; Ephesians 4:11–12). Follow spiritual leaders who are serious Bible teachers, who labor to accurately communicate His Word. Remember the basic meaning of a disciple (*mathetes*) is “a learner.”

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE ILLUSTRATED

What follows is a Bible survey on the importance of Bible knowledge and how absolutely imperative it is relative to maturation and usefulness in Christ.

A. JOSHUA ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall medi-

tate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (Joshua 1:8).

The first five books of the OT, Genesis through Deuteronomy, were and are known as the books of the law.⁴ They were and are the primary source for all Jewish and Christian behavior and are quoted extensively by the Psalmist, Jeremiah, and Jesus. The commandment to *meditate day and night* informs us as to how we ought to shape and prioritize the habit patterns of our life. The reason is self-evident from the passage: *so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it*. I.e., knowledge is the precursor of obedience. What follows in the passage are the benefits from a life of learning God’s Handbook and diligently applying it: *prosperity* (*tsalach*) “to advance, thrive, to be victorious” and *success* (*sakal*): “Wise behavior, discernment and prudence.” What a terrific motivation to study God’s Word daily!

B. THE PSALMIST ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers (Psalm 1:2–3).

The Psalmist captures the vivid picture of a lush *tree* in contrast to the overall arid geography of Palestine in order to illustrate the benefits of *meditating* on God’s Word. Again, what great promises as to what is produced in the life of the

♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

Colossians 3:16

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you...”



Grow strong in Christ via the progression of Proverbs: Instruction leads to knowledge, knowledge leads to understanding, and understanding leads to wisdom!





John Jay



“The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next. Continue therefore to read it and to regulate your life by its precepts.”

— John Jay, President of Congress; diplomat; author of *The Federalist Papers*; original Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court; Governor of New York.

John Jay, *John Jay: The Winning of the Peace. Unpublished Papers 1780-1784*, Richard B. Morris, editor (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980), Vol. II, p. 709, to Peter Augustus Jay on April 8, 1784.

believer who internalizes the precepts of God! Herein, then, is God’s formula for a lifetime of productivity befitting of God’s glory (cf. Ephesians 2:10).

C. DAVID ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against you (Psalm 119:11).

Psalm 119 is all about the benefits of God’s Word in the life of the believer and relates specifically to the Word of God being the best weapon to ward off sin. Underscoring this truth is verse 9, *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to your word.* Our quest for personal holiness is directly related to our understanding of what personal holiness is!⁵ Once he learned it, David states that he ingested that knowledge within himself and it became a deterrent to *sin*. When we memorize Scripture, the Holy Spirit will use it to further catalyze, strengthen and convict our conscience during times of temptation.

D. PROVERBS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Interestingly for Public Servants, a father writes the Book of Proverbs to his son who would become the next King. *Here, then, is a Bible book especially meant for preparing leaders for office.* As such, it could appropriately bear the title, *How to be a Wise Government Leader.* It is a profound work whose author makes an all-out attempt to convince one to be wise. One who repeatedly studies this book will begin to catch its amalgamated overarching message: Instruction

leads to knowledge, which leads to understanding, which leads to discretion.

In that pursuit, the book pinpoints and identifies three kinds of people who are lacking in its objective of discretion (or wisdom): They are the *naïve*, or *simpleminded*, the *scoffer*, and the *fool*. Of the three, Proverbs attempts to convert the former to wisdom much more so than the latter two. Why? Definitely, the *scoffer* or *scorner* mocks and rejects wisdom and the *fool* will not listen to wisdom. The *naïve* person is only ignorant, versus rebellious and is therefore easier to convert to wisdom than the others; what mainly stands in the way of the *naïve* person’s salvation is his or her lack of knowledge. (Keep this in mind when you invite fellow Members to the Members Bible Study: the *naïve* person is more apt to take you up on your offer and gain spiritual insight than a *scoffer* or a *fool*). Proverbs 1:22 summarizes well the aforementioned, *“How long O naïve ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools hate knowledge?”*

It follows, as a man or woman of wisdom, that you must train yourself to lovingly discern the world through this categorical lens of Proverbs. For example, as you encounter *scoffers*, realize they by definition reject correction (9:7, 8). These are those who discard your biblical reasoning when sitting on a committee; they are, in essence, closed off from biblical truth, locked in their prideful ways (21:24). On the other hand, when you attempt to reason with a *fool*, who by definition rejects the fear of the Lord, the possibilities of getting anywhere are slim to none. 17:10 states, *A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than a hundred blows*



into a fool. Jesus reiterates these truths picturesquely in Matthew 7:6, “**Do not throw your pearls before swine.**” Beloved, invest your evangelistic efforts in impressionable *simpletons*.

In summary of this introduction to Proverbs relative to this study, the book contains many negative comments pertaining to *those who avoid the pursuit of knowledge*. It identifies three categories of people who are unknowledgeable. Summarily:

**IN PROVERBS,
ONE IS CATEGORIZED
AS WISE OR NAÏVE,
A SCOFFER OR A FOOL**

Which best describes you? It follows, and it should come as no surprise, that in almost every chapter of the book of Proverbs there is something to be said by Solomon regarding the importance of *knowledge* and understanding *as it relates to the goal of achieving wisdom*. The proverbial formula for attaining the objective of wisdom and discretion is to be open to instruction, gain knowledge and then apply it! Again, relative to the objective of this study, *knowledge* and *understanding* are the irreplaceable fundamental building blocks of wisdom! How then can you possibly be a wise leader of our country without first knowing the Bible? The answer is you cannot! In-depth Bible study in the capital must be normative for you!

The Hebrew word for *knowledge* is *da'at* and it means, “a knowing of truth and indeed of God Himself.”⁶ Therefore, when Proverbs speaks of *knowledge*, it is implying *knowledge*, that is true versus *knowledge* that is false. *Understanding* (*bina*) implies *knowledge* as its basis, and has an eye toward the abil-

ity to “discern between.” In 1 Kings 3:9 Solomon uses this word when he states that he may *discern* (*bin*) between good and evil.⁷ Predictably and characteristic of a *simpleton*, *scoffer* and *fool*, (of which there are plenty of illustrations in the capital community who run our country, I say that instructively with sadness, not mockingly) will be their inability to *discern* truth from error. Such is normative behavior for the lost (cf. Ephesians 2:1–6). They genuinely lack *understanding*, again, as meant in Proverbs, the ability to “*discern* between.” It follows then that you who possess *knowledge* and *understanding*, must not respond to the *simpleton* with disgust and anger, but to pray and evangelize them.

Notice the importance of Bible *knowledge* and *understanding* as they are emphasized in the following survey of passages in Proverbs:

1. *Fools hate knowledge* (1:22).

A *fool* in his rebellion toward God, will often not even listen to truth or sound reasoning when it comes to moral issues. Solomon is telling Rehoboam in this Proverb that the ungodly exhibit a disdain for even listening to the things of God. Analyzed through the lens of Scripture, this stems from their predisposition of rebellion toward their Maker and hatred for His moral edicts.

The *fool's* rebellion is the subject of Romans 1:18b–19: *men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them ...* Opposite of the *fool* who hates knowledge, Proverbs says, *The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge* (15:14).

John Adams



“I have examined all religions, and the result is that the Bible is the best book in the world.”

— John Adams, second President of the United States; signer of the Declaration of Independence; judge; diplomat; one of two signers of the Bill of Rights.

John Adams, *Works*, Vol. X, p. 85, to Thomas Jefferson on December 25, 1813.



James McHenry



“Bibles are strong protections. Where they abound, men cannot pursue wicked courses and at the same time enjoy quiet conscience.”

— James McHenry, Revolutionary Officer; Signer of the Constitution; Ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; Secretary of War under Presidents George Washington and John Adams.

Bernard C. Steiner, *One Hundred and Ten Years of Bible Society Work in Maryland, 1810-1920* (Maryland Bible Society, 1921), p. 14.

Will You Increase *in* Your Bible Knowledge This Year?

2. *Knowledge will be pleasant to your soul* (2:10).

This statement is hand-in-glove with what precedes it: *For wisdom will enter your heart*. In other words, when a person decides he wants to be wise and makes a volitional commitment to open to the pursuit of wisdom, he will find that gaining Bible knowledge is a pleasant experience to his inner being. States 29:18, *Happy is he who [knows and] keeps the law*.

3. *Blessed is the man who gains understanding* (3:13).

Additional benefits from gaining understanding are listed in the passages that follow: *For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand riches and honor* (3:14–16). Wow!

4. *My son, give attention to my words* (4:20).

Solomon emphasizes here the importance of knowing everything dad instructs regarding being wise. He goes on to emphasize gaining and applying knowledge, *Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart*. Again, the benefit package follows: *For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their body* (4:21–22). In principle, Solomon says wise people have fewer health problems. Verse 17:22 echoes, *A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones*. Such practical welfares do not accrue to *simpletons, scoffers, or fools*.

5. *Incline your ear to my understanding* (5:1).

This is a similar admonition to the one above, what is desired, however, differs: it is Solomon’s want for his son to preserve knowledge (5:2) so as to not fall into the snare of adultery.

ADULTERY IS A MUCH LARGER ENTICEMENT FOR SOMEONE IN ELECTED OFFICE BECAUSE POWER IS AN APHRODISIAC

Adultery occurs too often in the capital community. Immoral women tend to be more attracted to powerful men and vice-versa. Solomon knows this would be a big problem for his to-be-leader son (later in life it was for Solomon himself!), and therefore invests much time on preventative instruction. Throughout the whole of chapter 5, Solomon reasons why adultery is stupid and concludes in 5:23 [you will succumb to this] *for lack of instruction*.” Proverbs is saying that our knowledge, or lack thereof, regarding the stupidity of adultery directly relates to our eventual actions. Take heed.

6. *“I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to my instructors”* (5:13).

Those who succumb to adultery are testifying in their guilt and pain for living in direct contrast to the means by which adultery is avoided per the instruction of point 5 and 6: Inclining one’s ear toward instructors — i.e., Bible teachers. Get the connection here as to what Proverbs is saying:



THE NAÏVE IGNORE, SCOFFERS QUESTION, AND FOOLS REJECT TEACHERS WHO SPEAK WITH BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Do you avoid Bible instruction and instructors? Beware. Solomon says to Rehoboam that there is a relationship to the susceptibility of adultery when *“I have not listened ... nor inclined my ear to my instructors.”*

THERE IS A DEFINITE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE REJECTION OF AUTHORITATIVE BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND SUCCUMING TO ADULTERY

Ascertain this relationship for yourself by studying Proverbs, chapter five.

7. *For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light* (6:23).

It should be normative to want to learn the Word of God continually over a lifetime. What is taught and believed by a person will be emulated in them. Wise men and women manifest the Word of God because at some point they *inclined* themselves to *instructors* who *teach* its knowledge; they have feasted on it continually ever since! As a result, their lives reflect the *light* of God (cf. Ephesians 5:9).

8. *Keep ... my teaching as the apple of your eye* (7:2).

This is in line with the parental admonition in the previous chapter. Notice 7:1, *My son, keep my words, and treasure my commandments within you.*

Keep my commandments and live, and my teaching as the apple of your eye. Solomon goes on to say, *Call understanding your intimate friend* (7:4). Notice the repetition of the word *keep*. It connotes a lifetime of pursuit for the things of God. This passage also indicates continuity in parenting: *keeping* at the task of instructing our children with Scripture. The effective parent needs to ponder the question “Is my parental instruction biblically based?” “Do I hold to the knowledge of Scripture as the highest authority — is it the controlling factor in my parenting ideology?” Such will lead to putting a stop to the things in familial heritages that are evil and despicable and reprogramming the future family lineage with respective biblical knowledge and instruction in righteousness! You can change the course of your familial lineage! Commit to instructing and teaching biblical knowledge to your children and their children. This requires much effort and priority over many years via partnering with a biblically solid Church with a good youth ministry.

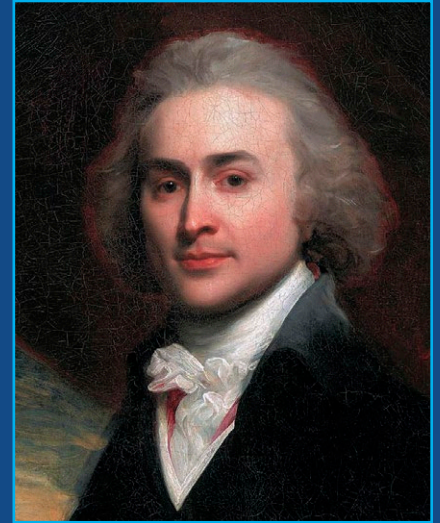
9. *Take knowledge over gold.* (8:10).

The most important thing a person can value in life is God’s instruction and knowledge. When we order our life by the standard of truth as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, we will be blessed. Verse 8:11 speaks of wisdom stemming from knowledge, *all desirable things cannot compare with her.* Proverbs 20:15 reinforces: *The lips of knowledge are a more precious thing.*

10. *In the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding* (9:10).

The wise man learns the attributes of

John Quincy Adams



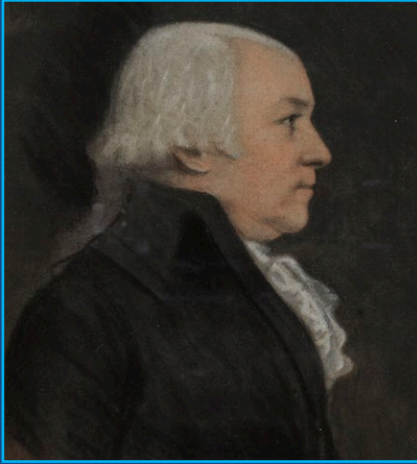
“The hope of a Christian is inseparable from his faith. Whoever believes in the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures, must hope that the religion of Jesus shall prevail throughout the earth. Never since the foundation of the world have the prospects of mankind been more encouraging to that hope than they appear to be at the present time. And may the associated distribution of the Bible proceed and prosper, till the Lord shall have made ‘bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.’ [Isaiah 52:10]”

—John Quincy Adams, sixth U.S. President; diplomat; Secretary of State; U.S. Senator; U.S. Representative..

William H. Seward, *Life and Public Services of John Quincy Adams* (New York: C.M. Saxton, Barker & Co., 1860), 249.



Elias Boudinot



“For nearly half a century have I anxiously and critically studied that invaluable treasure [the Bible]; and I still scarcely ever take it up that I do not find something new – that I do not receive some valuable addition to my stock of knowledge or perceive some instructive fact never observed before. In short, were you to ask me to recommend the most valuable book in the world, I should fix on the Bible as the most instructive both to the wise and ignorant. Were you to ask me for one affording the most rational and pleasing entertainment to the inquiring mind, I should repeat, it is the Bible; and should you renew the inquiry for the best philosophy or the most interesting history, I should still urge you to look into your Bible. I would make it, in short, the Alpha and Omega of knowledge.”

— Elias Boudinot, President of Congress; signed the Peace Treaty to end the American Revolution; first attorney admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar; framer of the Bill of Rights; director of the U.S. Mint.

Elias Boudinot, *The Age of Revelation, or the Age of Reason Shewn to be An Age of Infidelity* (Philadelphia: Asbury Dickins, 1801), p. xv, from his “Dedication: Letter to his daughter Susan Bradford.”

God from God’s revelation of Himself. It is this understanding of who God is that enables us to live wisely. To illustrate this, a legislator some years ago wrote me a personal letter criticizing a Bible study that I had taught. It was evident from reviewing his argument that seemingly He did not have any knowledge of God’s attribute of justice; he characterized God as if He had only one quality: love. While it is certainly true that God is loving, gracious, and forgiving, it is a sign of a *simpleton’s*, naiveté, to overlook or fail to understand His other attributes, such as holiness, righteousness, and perfection to name but a few. Agur stated in the last chapter of Proverbs, *Surely I am more stupid ...* (I do not have) *knowledge of the Holy One.* (30:2, 3). Agur is saying that a lack of knowledge is synonymous with stupidity. One cannot understand God and His ways with insufficient knowledge of *the Holy One*, i.e., who He is! This is why one should study the Word with fervor and seriousness and helps to explain why I go to such lengths every week to prepare Bible lessons that will encourage you and grow you in the knowledge of Him. There is nothing more important than this in the capital!

11. *The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined* (10:8).

The wise person is teachable, whereas a fool, (as previously noted) rejects knowledge (1:22) and is more interested in revealing his mind. States 18:2 *A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.* Fools tend to *babble* (*saphah*) “to prate.”⁸ The loquacious seem to not realize what God was signaling when He created mankind with two ears and one mouth. By way of application then:

AVOID SO-CALLED “BIBLE STUDIES” WHERE PEOPLE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN PREENING THAN LEARNING

Eat at good restaurants versus dieting on junk food. Don’t waste the little, precious time you have for spiritual growth where there is little to receive in terms of Bible instruction or knowledge. Your real need is not *babble*, it’s to learn the Bible!

12. *Through knowledge the righteous will be delivered* (11:9).

In order to properly understand what Solomon is stating here, this statement should be read with its companion, *The apostate⁹ with his mouth destroys his neighbor ...* What this means is that the righteous or wise person is delivered from false spiritual teachers because they are first knowledgeable, understanding, and discerning about the reality and presence of deceptive people.

A wonderful parallel passage in the NT pertains to the apostle Paul’s concern for the Corinthian church and the invasion of false teachers. ... *For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we [the apostles] have not preached ... or a different gospel which you have not [previously] accepted ...* [you end up accepting it]. Why? *I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray ...* (2 Corinthians 11:3–4) People are either misled or not *via the mind*. If one lacks knowledge about false teachers, he runs the risk of falling prey to them. Here then is another benefit: The way one is delivered from the lies of apostates is via knowledge of



the Word. Knowledge deters cults; it protects one from involvement in “ministries” that are sliding toward apostasy.

13. *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge. But he who hates reproof is stupid* (12:1).

In this Proverb, instruction is mentioned in the context and intention of correcting someone. This is contrasted to the person who will not allow others to instruct or correct them. Such a one is *stupid* (*baar*) meaning “to graze.” Accordingly, a person who is closed to growing from knowledge and instruction is no different than a cow on a hill. Think about it: Again, if we reject Bible knowledge we will fail to grow into wise and discerning, spiritually mature people. We will remain *naïve, scoffers* or *fools* with little impact on our world for God’s glory. As James states, *You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away* (4:14). Beloved, may that not be what people think at your funeral.

14. *The one who despises the word will be in debt to it* (13:13).

Romans 2:5 makes it very clear about the future that awaits those who reject God’s ways — and what’s more, in chapter one of Romans, God takes away the excuse “but I never knew” or better relative to our study, “I had no knowledge of this!” God states that all people know about Him, but that they *suppress the truth* (1:18). States 2:5, *But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Ignorance of the Word will not prove to be a legitimate excuse on the day of reckoning.

15. *By the transgression of the land, many are its princes, but by a man of understanding and knowledge, so it endures* (28:2).

Princes (*sar*) can also be translated as leaders. When a leader repeatedly sins in the leadership of a country, it will divide. But leaders who display biblical truths stemming from the knowledge of the same, make for an *enduring* land. By way of application, the commitment to teach and learn the whole counsel of God relative to political leaders has vast implications pertaining to the stability of a nation. This is an historic part of America’s heritage that we cannot afford to lose! Our nation will *endure* to the degree its leaders possess, understand and implement Bible knowledge! For several hundred years as a nation we have witnessed the truth of this Proverb!

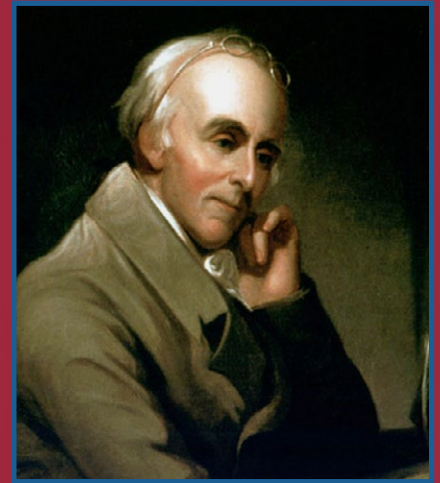
THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE THE CHURCH CAN PLAY IN THE STATE IS TO TEACH THE WORD OF GOD TO THE STATE’S LEADERS!

We must therefore keep producing leaders who possess biblical *understanding* and *knowledge*! It does a nation good!

E. PROVERBS CONTINUED

As stated earlier, Proverbs has something to say about knowledge in almost every one of its 31 chapters. It is a magnificent book that every legislator needs to receive instruction from, to know, to understand and apply! Here are some additional passages reflecting the important role that *knowledge* and *understanding* play:

Benjamin Rush



“[T]he greatest discoveries in science have been made by Christian philosophers and ... there is the most knowledge in those countries where there is the most Christianity.”

— Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence; Surgeon General of the Continental Army; ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; ‘Father of American Medicine’; Treasurer of the U.S. Mint; ‘Father of Public Schools Under the Constitution.’

Benjamin Rush, *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1806), p. 84, Thoughts upon Female Education.”



Oliver Wolcott



“Through various scenes of life, God has sustained me. May He ever be my un-failing friend; may His love cherish my soul; may my heart with gratitude ac-knowledge His goodness; and may my desires be to Him and to the remem-brance of His name...”

— Oliver Wolcott, signer of the Declaration of Independence; military general; Governor of Connecticut.

Letters of Delegates to Congress: January 1, 1776-May 15, 1776, Paul H. Smith, editor (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 1978), Vol. 3, pp. 502-503, Oliver Wolcott to Laura Wolcott on April 10, 1776.

Will You Increase *in* Your Bible Knowledge This Year?

Every prudent man acts with knowledge (13:16)

The sensible are crowned with knowledge (14:18)

The lips of the wise spread knowledge (15:7) *to get understanding is to be chosen above silver* (16:16)

A man of understanding has a cool spirit (17:27)

The mind of the prudent ac-quires knowledge (18:15)

The ear of the wise seeks knowledge (18:15)

It is not good for a person to be without knowledge (19:2)

The wise receive knowledge (21:11)

Apply your mind to my knowledge (22:17)

Apply your ears to words of knowledge (23:12)

A man of knowledge increases power (24:5)

ten the law of your God, I also will for-get your children.

The priests in the Old Covenant nation of Israel were to be about teaching the Torah to the people. Hosea’s message from Yahweh was that the priests were shrinking from these responsibilities. They were not imparting the Word of God; in essence and specifically, they had rejected the duty of conveying biblical knowledge to the State. How important was this from God’s perspec-tive? So important that He defrocked the priests! Today as then, God expects the pastor-teacher to primarily be about imparting biblical knowledge (cf. Ephe-sians 4:11, 12) to God’s flock and the nation as a whole. In vivid contrast to the deficient priests of the OT, the apos-tle Paul said to the Ephesian elders, ***For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God*** (Acts 20:27). God, the prophets, and the apostles ev-idence the importance of Bible knowl-edge.

G. JESUS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth (John 17:17).

Sanctification has to do with a setting apart of something for a specific use. Herein, Jesus Christ states how He in-tends to set apart and cleanse His fol-lowers — by His Word, the Scriptures. Similarly, in Ephesians 5:26, Paul states of Christ, that He sanctifies His church ***... with the Word***. Accordingly, Jesus re-veals the means by which He will grow His body into His likeness. If then, one has limited knowledge of the Bible how will that person be pleasing to God? How will they grow?

F. HOSEA 4:6 ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

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 forgot-



IS IT NOT INCONGRUOUS FOR YOU TO SAY YOU LOVE JESUS AND THEN FAIL TO “LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY?”

It makes no sense to state that you love *Christ* and simultaneously disregard His *Word*. That’s like saying you love your spouse but don’t care for his or her impartation of knowledge in the relationship.

H. PAUL ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ... (Romans 12:2)

In this section of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul is addressing the behavioral growth of the believer. Notice what he says regarding the way a person is *transformed* (*metamorphoo*) “a change in outward appearance” into Christlikeness. It is via *the renewing of your mind*. Ultimately, God is the one through His grace that is *renewing* the believer’s *mind* via the indwelling Holy Spirit. But having said that, the believer is to dwell on, ... *whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right ...* (Philippians 4:8) which displays and indicates knowledge about such things. To come full circle, it is the learning of Scripture in the life of the believer that is used by the Holy Spirit, which renews the mind and transforms the life. Conversely, there is no transformation if there is no mental renewal from scriptural ingestion. Real spiritual growth, Paul is stating, is fundamentally dependent on Bible knowledge.

III. THE BENEFITS OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

The Apostle Peter states in 2 Peter 3:16–18 that biblically untaught and unstable people *distort ... the Scriptures, to their own destruction*. As mentioned, one of the disturbing ways that the Scriptures are distorted in the capital is to greatly downplay them (not to mention eisegetical use — imposing their interpretation — with no regard for context).

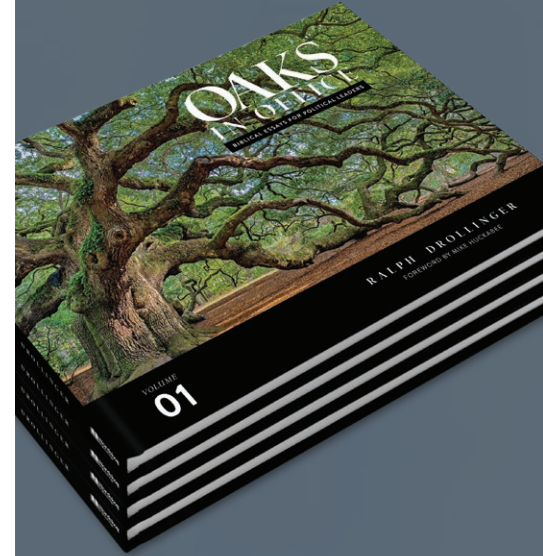
In response to such people, note what Peter warns about in the same passage:

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is a fitting summary to this overwhelming emphasis of Scripture — that Bible *knowledge* is *absolutely* and *extremely* important! Do not be misled by the words and advice of *simpletons*, *scoffers*, or *fools* who will be sure to say otherwise!

RATHER THAN LISTEN TO WHAT THE NAÏVE, SCOFFERS, AND FOOLS SAY ABOUT THE BIBLE, LISTEN TO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THEM!

Grow strong in Christ via the progression of Proverbs: Instruction leads to knowledge, knowledge leads to understanding, and understanding leads to wisdom! **cm**



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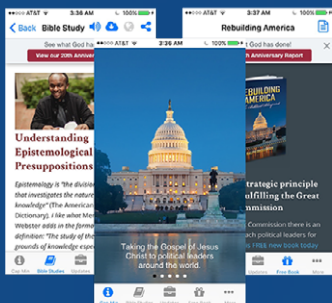
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- “The truth of premises by showing what follows from them (Merriam-Webster).
- I have often heard those attempting to support this position posture the idea that all one need do to grow in Christ likeness is to “Just love Jesus.” Further, they cite 1 Corinthians 8:1, ... *knowledge puffs up, but love edifies*. Such pretext for a proof text, however, is counter to context. In the surrounding passages, what Paul is stating is definitely true, meaning, if knowledge is one’s end-goal then knowledge will make one arrogant (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:2). That statement is certainly true. However, Paul is in no way here countering his statement in Romans 12:2, *Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*. Yes, the pursuit of knowledge can be wrongly motivated, but with humble, God-fearing motives of becoming more like Christ, obtaining biblical knowledge is the God-ordained means for achieving such.
- Noetic: The intellect.
- To the Hebrew mind, the Torah, to the Gentile mind, The Pentateuch.
- The legalist adds whereas the libertines diminish what God’s standards are.
- Notice that the first nine chapters of Proverbs are motivational, often enticing the reader to pursue wisdom based on the benefits.
- I believe a lack of spiritual discernment—proverbial understanding—is one of the greatest problems in the Church today.
- To talk at length and to little purpose: to be loquacious: chatter foolishly and without real understanding (Merriam-Webster).
- The KJV, NKJV and NAS all translate this Hebrew word as ‘hypocrite’ but Kidner argues effectively (I think) for ‘apostate.’ Kidner, Derek Proverbs, *An Introduction and Commentary* (Downer’s Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1964) p. 91.