



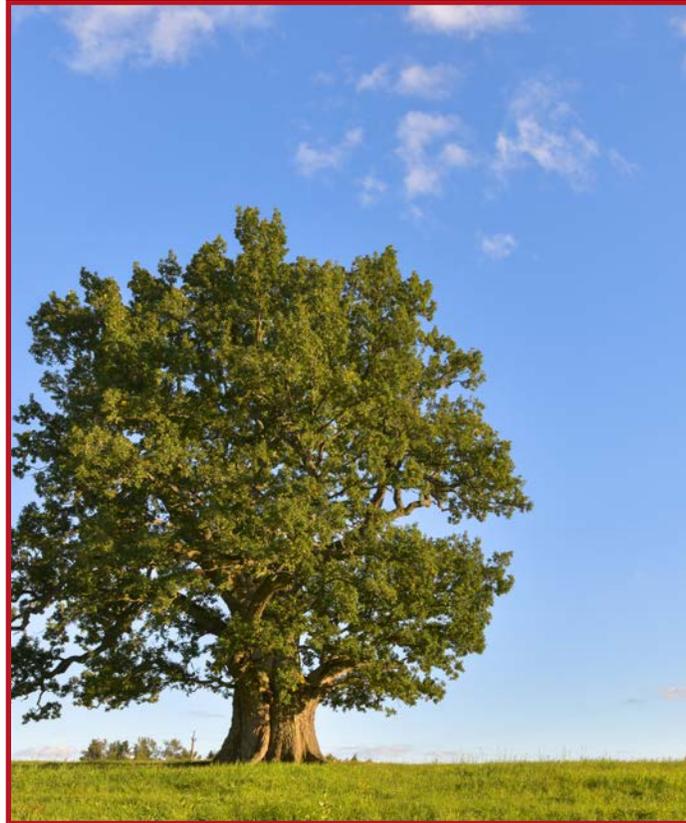
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The Essentiality of Knowledge



SCRIPTURE IS REPLETE WITH VERSES THAT emphasize how the believer must be characterized first and foremost by love. Love is essential and preeminent! But a close second is the believer's lifetime pursuit of knowledge. In fact, Proverbs calls those who are lacking in knowledge simpletons, whereas those who are called wise have knowledge.

As a Public Servant, one cannot be unloving, nor a simpleton in order to be a good witness for Christ as well as be effective in office. This study will seek to develop and further enhance the importance of the pursuit of knowledge in the life of the believer.

Read on, my friends.

Ralph Drollinger
 Ralph Drollinger

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Weekly Bible Studies

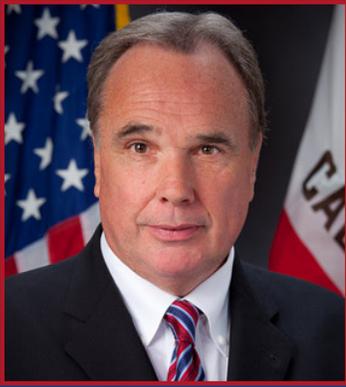
CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. *Light Refreshments Served.*
 SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*
 HOUSE: 9-10 PM Tuesdays Capitol Hill Club, Main Dining Room. *Dessert Served.*





PUBLIC SERVANT QUOTE

Mike Morrell
California State Senator
District 23



I STARTED DOING THE CAPITOL Ministries Bible studies that are led by Ralph Drollinger on my own and I greatly appreciate the in-depth look at scriptural principles. Ralph is relevant and he takes on the big issues of the day that many run from. I encourage every state to embrace Capitol Ministries, which prepares lawmakers to make those tough decisions." cm

I. INTRODUCTION

The primacy of love over knowledge is underscored in 1Corinthians 13:1 wherein the great Apostle states, If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Elsewhere, in 1Corinthians 8:1, Paul concludes similarly: in comparing knowledge to love he makes a similar comparison when he states . . . knowledge puffs up, but love edifies (NKJV). For sure, knowledge as a pursuit of one's life should take a back seat to the priority of love. Loving our Savior and loving others must be the primary pursuit of the believer's life. But having said that, one cannot conclude that to be in a constant pursuit of knowledge deems one as unloving.

II. THE FALSE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

An important clarification is in order relative to the tension between love and knowledge: In stating the preeminence of love over knowledge, it is improper to assert that someone who is knowledgeable and in the pursuit of knowledge is therefore somehow less than loving. To diminish the importance of knowledge relative to spiritual maturity in favor of just being loving is to do a Public Servant a great disservice. In fact, I was recently with someone who said he thought that one of America's greatest theologically-conservative seminaries was more of a "cemetery" than a "seminary." Such thinking serves to make the point; this is a tragic mindset that is ever-increasing in American Christianity today. To illustrate this point metaphorically:

CAN YOU SAY THAT SOMEONE WHO EATS AN ENORMOUS BREAKFAST EACH MORNING IS AN OVER-EATER WHEN HE IS PREPARING TO COMPETE IN THE TOUR DE FRANCE?

In a spiritual sense, the mental preparedness, the gaining of knowledge, is quite essential for any important Kingdom assignment – such as serving Christ in city, county, state, or national government. In fact, nutrition is a prerequisite for performing with excellence. So, don't be misled by those who would have you diminish your pursuit of knowledge, especially knowledge of God's ways per His Word! The believer

in office, or any citizen for that matter, can be both knowledgeable and loving at the same time. Those who pursue knowledge are not necessarily unloving; such is to propagate a false dichotomy.

III. THE UNDERLYING MOTIVES OF GAINING KNOWLEDGE

The appropriateness or otherwise sinfulness of and in the pursuit of knowledge depends largely on motives. As previously stated from 1Corinthians 8:1, knowledge can puff up . . . meaning it can be the pursuit of a proud heart in order to show one's self as superior. However, as stated in the previous point, knowledge can be equivalent to preparedness.

IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, THE WORD "KNOWLEDGE" APPEARS 40 TIMES, AND IS ALWAYS RELATED TO AND DESCRIPTIVE OF A WISE PERSON

Proverbs 1:22 states in this regard:

"How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?"

In Proverbs 1:28-29, knowledge is directly related to finding God:

"Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD."

These passages are but two that characterize the pursuit of knowledge in a positive light. Accordingly, the underlying motive for gaining knowledge is often a determinative factor whether or not it is a holy pursuit. If one possesses the right spirit of glorifying God, building His Kingdom, winning the lost to Christ, being a preserver and illuminator in culture, then the quest for knowledge is undoubtedly a wonderful thing that is both God honoring and God blessed!

IV. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS DEPENDENT ON KNOWLEDGE

Perhaps the most powerful way to illustrate the point being made here — that the Bible



teaches that one's faith in Christ must be cognitive as well as **loving** — is to examine the three biblically-identified stages of the believer's spiritual growth as listed in 1John 2:12-14. What is contained in this passage illustrates the proposition that **knowledge** is extremely important to the Christian's life and growth in Christ! In fact, without the pursuit of biblical **knowledge** there will be no maturation in Christ. Carefully observe how each of the following stages of spiritual growth are dependent on **knowledge**:

A. SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF PASSAGE

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

The below chart is an attempt to sort out the above, twice repeated, three distinct stages of spiritual maturity as delineated by the Apostle John in this aforementioned passage. Observe what titles John places on each: **little children**, **fathers**, and **young men**. Think of John's communication style here to be similar to someone painting a wall with two separate coats in order to obtain the desired outcome:

The THREE STAGES of SPIRITUAL GROWTH in CHRIST 1John 2:12-14

Growth Stage	Characterized By	Verse
CHILD	Sins forgiven	12
	You know the Father	13
YOUNG MAN	Overcome the evil one	13, 14
	You are strong	14
	The Word of God abides in you	14

FATHER	Know Him	13
	Know Him who has been from the beginning	14

In John's biblical analogy of physical maturation to spiritual maturation, the Greek words used to describe the believers' stages of growth are not intended to relate to his or her physical age, but rather spiritual maturity. Again, keep in mind the overall point for delving into this exercise: each of these stages of spiritual growth relate to and are dependent on **knowledge**! With this in mind, look more closely at each of the three:

B. LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE FAITH

Little children are saved but they only possess a rudimentary understanding of God: "Jesus **loves** me this I **know** for the Bible tells me so!" is depicting of their very minimalistic level of understanding of salvation: they possess little biblical **knowledge**. Nonetheless, they possess enough biblical **knowledge** to be genuinely saved; this is in comparison to an unsaved person who does not possess this saving **knowledge**.

SATAN CAN AND OFTEN DOES MAKE HAVOC OF LITTLE CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY HAVE LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILES

Christian cults often target **little children** in the faith because they are tenderhearted toward spiritual matters, but very naïve; Ephesians 4:14 is descriptive and admonishing of infant believers:

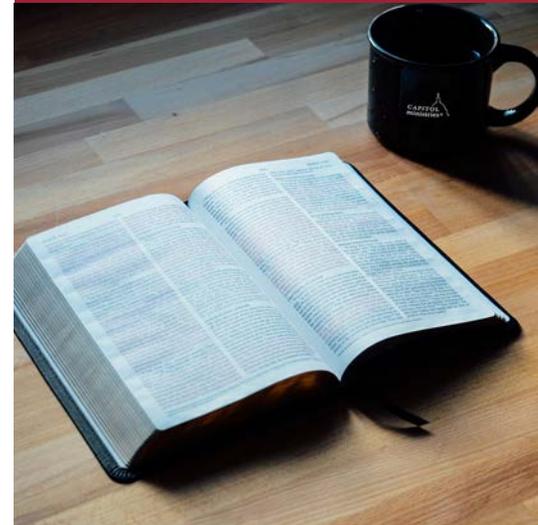
As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.

Spiritual babes, this passage states, should not remain in such a state of infancy. They should not remain naïve, or unknowledgeable of the **winds**, **trickery** and **craftiness** that have the potential to make them highly unstable as newborn babes in Christ. In opposition to those who say that **knowledge** in the life of the believer is unimportant or of lesser importance, this passage points to the opposite: Scripture says **knowledge** is absolutely critical to spiritual maturity!

VERSE OF THE WEEK

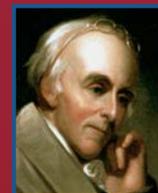
Proverbs 22:17-18

*Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your mind to my knowledge;
For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
That they may be ready on your lips.*



Don't let anyone lead you into thinking that the Christian life does not include a hearty pursuit of knowledge; as if the pursuit of mastering God's Word is less than spiritual.

Benjamin Rush



"The Bible contains more knowledge necessary to man in his present state than any other book in the world."

— 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 & Philosophical* (Philadelphia: Thomas & Samuel F. Bradford, 1798), p. 93, "A Defence of the Use of the Bible as a School Book;" see also Rush, Letters, Vol. I, p. 578, to Jeremy Belknap on March 2, 1791.



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C. YOUNG MEN OF THE FAITH

Young men are those who, while not yet having walked with God over a longer period of time and gotten to know Him (as is the case with a father who has experienced the truths of His Word first-hand), do know sound doctrine (in contrast to the child of the faith whom yet does not). They are strong against sin and error because the word of God abides in them, which is synonymous with having knowledge of His Word. Per the descriptors given of a young man in this passage, it is via this knowledge that this believer has overcome the deceitfulness of the evil one.

D. FATHER OF THE FAITH

The father of the faith is the one whom John depicts as the most spiritually mature; he has a deep, abiding knowledge of the Eternal God: twice John states, he knows Him. This is commensurate with Philippians 3:10 wherein the Apostle Paul states regarding himself (himself a father of the faith), that I may know Him. Accordingly:

THE HEIGHT OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS TO KNOW GOD IN HIS FULLNESS VIA HIS WORD AS WELL AS THE FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF HAVING PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED THE TRUTHS OF HIS WORD IN ONE'S LIFE

V. SUMMARY OF THE THREE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

All three of the aforementioned stages of spiritual growth are related to commensurate knowledge. The point again, that which makes this passage worth mentioning at length, is that one can only become a father in the faith and have profound intimacy with God by first becoming a believer, who herein is termed a little child in the faith as a result. The little child then grows to become a young man by being strong in the Word which implies obtaining knowledge. It is from that vantage point that He becomes a father in the faith. Proverbs 22:17 is a fitting summation: Apply your mind to my knowledge.

VI. CONCLUSION

Herein lies the biblical case for the noble pursuit of knowledge: In a nutshell, it is tantamount to spiritual maturation and God's glorification! Biblical and vocational knowledge is extremely important, foundational, and critical in the life of every believer and especially those who serve in leadership. Proverbs 3:3 states very fittingly that both knowledge and love are essential to the life of the believer:

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Accordingly, and importantly relative to spiritual growth, don't let anyone lead you into thinking that the Christian life does not include a hearty pursuit of knowledge; as if the pursuit of mastering God's Word is less than spiritual. No. cm

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