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What Can be Known Can be Shown

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All rational students of the Bible want to be told, by teachers and preachers, not just what to believe, but also why those things are to be believed. Every faithful teacher of the Bible is prepared to deliver both in clear terms. Bible doctrines are all taught by specific Bible passages and the connections between them can be described in terms that the average man can understand.

Those who have devoted the time and effort necessary to mine truth from the gold mine that we call the Bible are able to clearly trace the path to the treasure-trove for others to follow. The Bible is not a mystical book that can only be understood by the scholarly few who can then only pass along the correct conclusions without expressing the reasons for those conclusions. Instead it is a living book whose meaning is available to all who will seek wisdom (Prov. 9:1-6). The true Biblical scholar is one who has truly discovered truth and who is willing and able to show that truth, and its source, to others.

This is why the pseudo-scholars of the first century stumbled over the simplicity of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:18-24). They demanded to hear what was "profound", "wise", "deep", and "intellectual" according to human standards and they were irritated with the "foolishness" of the simple gospel of Christ. To them, the gospel was shallow and they wanted what they perceived to be deep. When some with this mindset were "converted" they attempted to distance themselves from the simplistic, shallow teaching of the apostles and to elevate themselves as the truly wise and sophisticated in the early church. Paul's inspired sarcasm was designed to warn them and not to shame them (1 Cor. 4:9-14).

Pseudo-scholars exist among us today. The simplicity of the gospel is not enough for them. They are not content to simply learn what the Book of God says and to remain with it. They are constantly searching for something new and profound that will show others how wise they are. When questioned about the book, chapter, and verse of their novel "discoveries" they are not able to locate them specifically because they are often several steps away from what the scriptures actually teach and separated from the Word of Truth by the great gulf of pure human speculation. Even so, they are seldom at a loss for words when questioned. Their answers emphasize their own wisdom in some way and suggest that their conclusions ought to be accepted because of the greatness of the miner who brought them forth. But they cannot point the way to the mother-lode.

One such brother argued, in my hearing, that we should accept his conclusion because he had spent several months studying the matter under consideration in the great library at Harvard University. A "televangelist" suggested recently that his doctrine was true because he had spent years with the subject constantly in his mind. Others are heard to affirm that their conclusions are to be accepted because of the number of hours they spent studying the subject, or because of the degrees that they hold, or because of their own ability to see what is not clearly taught. But they cannot produce a "thus saith the Lord". Such is just too shallow for the "wise".

The true Bible student who attempts to teach his subject to others is delighted to have questions concerning the source of all that he teaches. He takes those things in the Bible that may appear complicated at first and explains them in terms that a child could understand without the first thought of whether he is or is not perceived by his hearers as "wise" or "profound". And he is not intimidated, in the least, by those among his hearers who call his work "shallow".

Pearl S. Buck, in her novel, *Pavilion of Women*, placed the following words in the mind of Madam Wu as she was being instructed by "Brother Andre": Now, his manner of answering questions was exceedingly simple, but this was because he was so learned. He did not need, as lesser men do, to talk over and above the pith of the matter. Instead, he knew how...to put

into a handful of words the essence of the essence of truth. He stripped the leaves away, and he plucked the fruit and cracked the husk and peeled the inner shell and split the flesh and took out the seed and divided it, and there was the kernel, pure and clean (p. 174).

This is a good picture of a true scholar. He has knowledge to share but no need to prove that he is noteworthy. His delight is in helping others to find what he has found. His goal is to know truth and to point the way to it without seeking recognition for his own abilities. He knows that what can be known can be shown and that the feigned knowledge of pseudo-scholars is fools gold. Any map showing the source of such spurious teaching would have to trace a path to the mind of some proud pretender who desires to be recognized as a great teacher, who does not understand what he is saying or what he is affirming (1 Tim. 1:7).

So be diligent in questioning what you do not understand from any teacher of the word. Anyone who has found the truth can show you its source. Others will point in obscure directions or simply become angry with the questioner.

One Another's Well-Being

By Jonathan L. Perz

The church at Corinth struggled in a variety of ways. As Paul writes to them, one particular principle seems to surface frequently. They are admonished to look out for one another's well-being. Do we do so?

Whether issues relating to eating meat offered to idols, tarrying one for another when observing the Lord's Supper, marriage relationships, spiritual gifts, filing lawsuits against brethren, or immorality among them, one admonition resonates repeatedly. In sundry ways, they were told, "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being" (1 Cor. 10:24).

Upon this principle hinges much of the two greatest commandments (Mark 12:30-31. Simply stated, we cannot love God without loving one another (1 John 4:20-21).

Seeking one another's well-being is definitely not sacrificing or scarcely considering the concerns of others to attain our own desires. It is also not merely avoiding pressing our own wants and needs instead of giving thought to others first. The love God shows us ought to compel us to actually sacrifice for one another, putting the concerns and interests of others above our own. When this happens, there will be others putting our concerns and interests above their own. Brethren will be looking out for brethren. Brotherly love will continue (Heb. 13:1).

The apostle Paul told the Philippians, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). All it takes is one brother selfishly and conceitedly pursuing his own above others to undermine the most precious and essential spirit of brotherly love that must exist among us.

We easily forget that it is our love and care for one another that sets us apart from the world and marks us most distinctively as His disciples. Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another" (John 13:35).
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