

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Surpassing Knowledge

Introduction

Knowledge has always been a pursuit of mine. Even before knowing the Lord, I sought knowledge and understanding of how the world works by studying various science disciplines. After knowing the Lord in the fullness of His Spirit, I cast aside the pursuit of knowledge about natural things and, instead, sought knowledge and understanding of how spiritual things worked.

At first much of this was by natural effort, that is, human study of spiritual truth. However, it is impossible for the natural mind to comprehend or understand spiritual truth [*1 Cor. 2:14*]. It took me a while to realize this but eventually I understood that our understanding had to be enlightened by the Lord [*Eph. 1:18*].

This also was true of the Twelve Disciples. Even though they had walked with Him for three years and had seen all of the miracles and heard all of His teachings, they still had little understanding. After Jesus' resurrection and before His ascension He found it necessary to enlighten them. Although they had all of the facts, they didn't understand.

Luke 24:45 NASB Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

Our goal (even for those of us who are teachers) is not to study facts about God as so many seem to do, but to seek the face of God [*1 Chron. 16:11; Ps. 105:4*] and to seek His Kingdom, the realm of His government.

Mark of Maturity

There is a natural growth process that occurs as we begin our walk with the Lord as typified by Jesus's words in Matthew 7:7-8 where He spoke of asking, seeking and knocking. Our early life in the Lord is exemplified by asking. We are dumbfounded by the abundance of the grace and mercy provided by Christ Jesus that is all available to us by the simple act of asking. As we mature a little we begin to seek after the purposes of the Lord which leads us into seeking His face and His kingdom. When we reach a level of maturity where we begin to enter the ministry plans that the Lord has for us we enter the knocking stage where we knock on the doors of opportunity for service to the Lord.

While knowledge is a help it cannot carry us through the completion of this process of growing up. Knowledge by itself will only build the mind of the natural man causing arrogance.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3 NASB (1) Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. (2) If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; (3) but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

Paul is speaking to a situation that is troubling the believers in Corinth and he says that you can have knowledge about the correct actions but still be wrong in regard to your interaction with your brother and sister believers. What then do we need to add to knowledge? Peter gives us a clear picture of the growth process.

2 Peter 1:5-7 NASB Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, (6) and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, (7) and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

To faith we add moral excellence. To moral excellence we add knowledge. (this is where we tend to stop with good character, good conduct and knowledge.) Peter goes on to say, to knowledge add self-control. To self-control add perseverance. To perseverance add godliness. To godliness add brotherly kindness and finally as the end product of the process, to brotherly kindness add love. The fruit of the growth process is love.

Notice that the seed of this tree is “faith”. As with all things that are done by God, He doesn't depend upon anything in us but makes His own provision as God has allotted to each of us a measure of faith [*Rom. 12:3*]. We are all given by the Lord enough spiritual resources to begin the process. He then waters this seed by the Holy Spirit and the trying of our faith [*James 1:3*] in order to produce love, the fruit of the Spirit. (Notice that love is never referred to as a gift but always as a fruit in the Scriptures.)

We can sum this up by saying that “love surpasses knowledge”. Paul said this in Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:14-19 NASB For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, (15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, (16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, (17) so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (19) and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Paul told the Corinthians [*1 Cor. 13:2*] that if he understood all mysteries, had all knowledge, operated in all faith, but didn't have love then he was nothing. In the next verses he refers to doing all sorts of good works, but without love, it profits him nothing. His good deeds are of no value without love.

I have had to change my focus from “knowledge” to “love”. Because to know the love of Christ surpasses knowledge. And to seek His face is to find love and be changed from glory to glory into His love in order to show forth His love to others.

1 John 3:2 NASB Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

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For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com