

Knowledge vs. Ignorance

*GEN 3:22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to **know good and evil.***

The expression "to know good and evil" has nothing to do with education, understanding, or knowledge of data. The word "know" here signifies the same thing it does in Spanish. It means to "know" experimentally like Adam "knew" his wife (Gen 4:1). Man now would know good and evil by experience. Before he sinned, he was innocent. To the pure, all things are pure.

*1 Cor. 8:1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.***

Here is a verse that is quoted out of context constantly. "Knowledge puffs up." What kind of knowledge? Knowledge concerning things offered to idols. In other words, if you know that it is O.K. to eat meat offered to idols, but you do it in spite of the conscience of the ignorant who think it is sin, that kind of knowledge puffs up. Those who quote that verse with the aim of putting down teaching, understanding, and knowledge of facts, are simply looking for an excuse for being lazy minded. Maybe they think it is more spiritual to be ignorant. Actually, when one is ignorant, there is a greater likelihood of his being puffed up by thinking he knows it all. The truly educated person has learned how much he really does not know. That tends to produce humility.

ISA 44:25 Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad; Who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness;

When the Bible speaks against knowledge, we have to have enough education and humility to go then and there to see what kind of knowledge God is against. He is against the kind of knowledge that is incomplete! The fear of the Lord is lacking. Actually, it is ignorance that puffs up even more than incomplete knowledge. Incomplete knowledge *is* ignorance. Ignorance thinks it knows it all. Child-like hunger for truth is humble. It wants to understand and be taught better by any man. It also has the simple courage to believe that God *can* give understanding if we ask. It believes the book is "unsealed" and open.

1 COR. 13:8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

In what way will knowledge, prophecies, and tongues cease? Well, in heaven we will understand perfectly. That is how. Until then, we are to seek these gifts coupled with love. It is not a matter of choosing love and rejecting knowledge. We do not have that option. We are to seek both. The following passages prove it.

PRO 2:1 My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you,

*2 so that you **incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;***

*3 yes, if you cry out for **discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding,***

*4 If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for **hidden treasures**;*

*5 then you will **understand** the fear of the LORD, and find the **knowledge** of God.*

*6 For the LORD gives **wisdom**; from His mouth come **knowledge** and **understanding**;*

Those who say that education and knowledge are unimportant to God, perhaps are just too lazy to obey what God says in Proverbs. Or maybe they are looking for an excuse to not listen to someone who has more information. "After all," they think, "they are not as spiritual as we who are more ignorant, but more spiritual. We are more successful in practical matters. We are winning the masses. We have to be ignorant like them in order to reach them." *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (Phil. 2:3)* Proverbs 4:5 says, "**Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.**"

To get understanding, we must not be so conceited that we think we do not need the fathers of the faith. We must know history, or we are doomed to repeat the failures of the past. Why is it so important to get understanding? Because all of history does not center on our generation. Because evolution is false. We are not better than our fathers. If we do not have sufficient data, we cannot make proper decisions for the future. But as a toothless hillbilly once said to me, "It won't be long now." I said, "Until what?" He said, "Til Jeeeeeeeeeesus comes." In that case there is no need to prepare for the morrow. "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise." (Prov. 6:6) If we are like the ten foolish virgins, we will not plan for the future. Yes, the motive for being uneducated, as in the case of the sluggard, could be laziness. The ant provides her supplies for the winter. A lack of patience and poor planning are not virtues.

*1 Pet. 1:5 But also for this very **reason**, giving all **diligence**, add to your faith **virtue**, to **virtue knowledge**.*

The church today is not as educated as our Puritan fathers were. Could that be the reason we are losing so many battles in the public arena?

*Hos..... 4:6 My people are destroyed for **lack of knowledge**. Because you have rejected **knowledge**, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

God promises in the following passage to give us wisdom if we ask in faith believing that He will give it. How can one expect to get wisdom if he does not ask for it? Ignorance thinks it knows enough. It is not willing to be child-like enough to open the mind. It is afraid that it will be found wrong. That is pride. Are we willing to change our minds?

*JAM 1:5 If any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

One man said to me, "Would God be so stupid as to write the Bible in a way that the common man could not understand it?" Ignorance has its mind made up that God would be stupid if He did that. Yet that is exactly what Jesus said He was doing when He spoke in parables.¹ God hides His truth. Only those who love wisdom will take the time to search out the answers to enigmas, proverbs and riddles.

PRO 1:5 A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

*6 to understand a **proverb** and an **enigma**, the words of the wise and their **riddles**.*

*MAT 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because **You have hidden these things** from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes."*

Who are the "wise and prudent" to whom Jesus is referring? They are the scribes and Pharisees who had incomplete knowledge. Some say, "All I need is the Bible. I do not need to know literature or consult with commentaries." Isn't that a little arrogant? Are you the only one God speaks to? Peter said *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.* (1 PET. 1:20) Even Daniel had skill in "all literature."

*DAN 1:17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and **skill in all literature** and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.*

One man told me that he did not need a teacher. In one sense this is true. We should think for ourselves, and not just take what someone says without checking it and testing it. On the other hand, God has placed teachers in the church for our edification.

*HEB 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, **you need someone to teach you** again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

If I am going to be child-like, teachable, and humble, then I must read what God has shown to others. The universe does not center around me. The earth is not flat. Matter of fact, the sky is not even falling! When God wanted to do something momentous, he chose an educated man like

Moses or Stephen. Paul was the most educated of all the apostles. He was the one to pick up where Stephen left off and to lead the church into uncharted waters.

*ACT 7:22 "And **Moses was learned** in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.*

*ACT 6:10 And they were not able to resist the **wisdom** and the Spirit by which he[Stephen] spoke.*

We should never take one man's word for anything. In the mouth of two or more witnesses let every word be established. Let us check all the men of God throughout history. Or would we rather "reinvent orthodoxy on the anvil of anti-historical provincialism?" (Sandlin)

DAN 5:12 "Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, **knowledge, understanding**, interpreting dreams, **solving riddles**, and **explaining enigmas** were found in this Daniel.

PRO 1:22 "How long, you simple ones, will you love **simplicity**? For scorners delight in their scorning, and **fools hate knowledge**.

PRO 10:14 Wise people store up **knowledge**, but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

PRO 11:9 ... through **knowledge** the righteous will be delivered.

PRO 12:1 Whoever loves instruction loves **knowledge**, but he who hates reproof is stupid.

PRO 15:14 The heart of him who has **understanding seeks knowledge**, but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.

PRO 18:15 The heart of **the prudent acquires knowledge**, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

PRO 19:2 Also it is not good for a soul to be without **knowledge**, and he sins who hastens with his feet.

QUESTION

How many vices and/or virtues can you find mentioned in this article? Please list them.