***Knowledge  
  
Colossians 1:3-8  
  
COL-077***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," segment number 11, in Colossians 1:9-14.

The apostle Paul, while he is in prison in Rome, has learned from Epaphras, a delegate from the city of Colossae, that the Colossian Christians live their lives on a magnificent scale, as a whole, in temporal fellowship with God the Father. This means that they are controlled by, or they are filled by, the Holy Spirit. This means that they are spiritual Christians, not carnal. This means that they are living at the spiritual maturity level of super-grace, or moving toward it; that is, they have a high spiritual quotient. There's a great difference between having an IQ (an Intelligence Quotient) and a spiritual quotient. Many people of great enormous intelligence are enormously low on the spiritual quotient side. That is because spiritual things, and the learning of spiritual things is not dependent on your smarts. It is dependent upon your willingness to be taught. You have demonstrated that in your case, by the fact that you are in this room. Others have demonstrated their negativeness by refusing to be here.

So, the issue that confronts all of us is how much do we want to know about God? How much do we want to go along with Him? Do we want to play dumb-dumb, or do we want to play smart-smart. And it is up to you. That spiritual IQ (that spiritual quotient) is a great thing to have at a high level.

So, the Colossian Christians have a spiritual condition which is evidenced by the fact that they have a great mental attitude love, which they do express toward others.

Now, what the apostle Paul wants is for the Colossians to maintain their spiritual, super-grace status. And he wants this so that they may serve God effectively as His witnesses. What he wants from them is that they, as believers, might make a powerful impact on the Roman Empire society of their city, and then to branch out from there. Paul does not want to see them become dysfunctional people who can be victimized by Satan through the sin nature; the evil world that Satan has organized; and, the lies that Satan puts out contradicting the Word of God.

It is possible (you must remember, and you must understand) for a Christian who is loyal to Jesus Christ, and who is devoted to His service to become a traitor – sometimes overnight. It can happen that quickly. A couple of biblical examples are John Mark, who deserted on the first missionary journey, and Demas, who deserted Paul because he fell in love with the world system. He wanted to be part of the gang. He wanted to be part of where it was at. So, he just walked off and left them. He went to Thessalonica to live the good life. And that had to be a crushing experience for Paul, for someone who had been a close companion in God's service.

**Benedict Arnold**

One of the all-time great historical examples in American history of this condition is the example of Benedict Arnold in the Revolutionary War when he suddenly became a dysfunctional American General. Two men were responsible for keeping the cause of the American Revolution and of American freedom alive the first year after the break with England. Those two men were George Washington and Benedict Arnold. Benedict Arnold won the early battles which finally raised the morale of the Americans after suffering a series of defeats. The great victory of Arnold at Fort Ticonderoga was electrifying to the Americans. For the first time, they began to feel that these militiamen; these farmers; and, these people who were just common ordinary citizens, could stand up to the well-trained regiments of the British army. Arnold demonstrated enormous cleverness in the battle of Lake Champlain, when the British had terrific (men of war) afloat, and Arnold is at the other end of the lake, building little cheap boats as fast as he could – little vessels that were well armed. And then, by cleverly positioning them (the few that he had), he held the British off. He didn't defeat them. He didn't have that kind of equipment. But he delayed the British so that their delay cost them victories later on, and enabled the Americans to take advantage of the time that Arnold gave them. So, this was a clever military man, and he was courageous in battle. He was not directing his troops from the rear. He was leading them from the front. He demonstrated his military prowess by executing a magnificent and very grueling campaign against Quebec in Canada. He came within a hair's breath of capturing Quebec. Had he taken Quebec, Canada would've become the 14th colony of the American Revolution. And as you read, the account of the hardships and the suffering that he and his men endured as they had to cut across Maine in the dead of winter, plowing their way through forests, and sometimes through swamp areas, such that when they got there, as exhausted as they were, immediately they went into battle. They came very close, but the fortunes of war, and the way things panned out, they were not able to overwhelm the Fortress at Quebec. But it was a magnificent effort, and it showed the courage of this man.

Benedict Arnold, however, in time became bitter because he was passed over for promotion. And if you're an officer in the military, that is always a serious matter. When your number comes up in the numerical order, and it's time for your promotion, then your record is examined. The officers that have been in command over you – they constantly give a fitness report on you. These are regularly in there. They pull out your fitness reports. And if it's a bad report, then you are passed over. Others are promoted, and you are left at the rank. When your name comes up a second time in the order of promotion, if the fitness report is again bad, they do not promote you, and you are dismissed from the service. Now, this was personally a bitter thing for Arnold, and it was not good for his reputation and career as an officer in the Continental Army, to be passed over.

Furthermore, he was involved in kind of wheeling and dealing things that led to a court-martial. The continental Congress finally, court-martialed him. But George Washington, because he knew the courage of this man, and he knew his devotion to the American cause, simply reprimanded him. Now, for an officer, that's not a good thing either, because that goes down on your record that you had to be reprimanded for some form of conduct or dereliction of duty, and George Washington made it as easy as he could by simply quietly reprimanding Benedict for his actions, and telling him to straighten up. He was using public funds in speculations for personal profit.

Now, the problem got terribly compounded when he decided to marry Peggy Shippen. Peggy Shippen was considerably younger than he was. She was a very attractive lady, but she was very socially minded. And she spent money lavishly, like a drunken sailor on leave, if we may use that analogy. But this put even more pressure on Benedict Arnold to stay up with his considerably younger wife and her social life. The problem was further compounded by the fact that she was a Tory. She was a known British sympathizer, and had family relationships to the British.

So, here the corrosiveness was eating away at Arnold from several directions. This terrifically functional military man, who kept us together, and upon whom on whom we have to this day (we must admit) American freedom – because of Washington and Benedict Arnold in the first year of the revolution.

Benedict Arnold had been wounded at the Battle of Saratoga. His thighbone had been broken by a musket ball and it would be very slow in healing, and it had been very painful for him. So, this was true. Washington wanted to put him in command of another campaign, but he said, "I don't think I'm fully restored. I'd like to be made commander of West Point." And the reason for that was that he was already beginning to plan his tyranny. Dysfunction had now set in, in a very dramatic way. Those of you who have ever stood at West Point, overlooking the Hudson River at the academy there, know that the river takes a sharp S-bend, and it's impossible for sailing vessels of that day to make that turn. When they get to that, they have to furl the sails, and they have to put out a boat with men in it, and men have to row the thing, and they have to carefully work their way around that S-bend. The Americans knew that that was the choke point of the Hudson River. As long as they controlled the traffic and the possession of the Hudson River, the colonies were united. If the enemy secured the Hudson River, the colonies would be divided in two. The British wanted the Hudson River desperately, but they were unable to take it, in large measure, because of the fort at West Point. In fact, the Americans had created a huge chain with enormous links. I forget how much the weight was of each link. And they strung this from an island that was in the river on one side, called Constitution Island, over to the bank at West Point. And they simply strung this river, and put it on floats, and there it stayed, and no ship could get through it. They could stop, and they could start dismantling the thing, but the cannon at West Point would've decimated them in the process.

So, it was impossible, because of that S-curve, to take the Hudson River, and thus to divide the colonies. What Benedict Arnold proposed to the British was: "I'll become commander of West Point. I'll make it possible for you to defeat the fort. And then you may remove the chain, and you will be in control of the fort and the guns, and you'll have control of the Hudson River, and the colonies will be cut in two." George Washington later described this as: "This would've been a mortal stab to the heart of the American Revolution's cause.

So, I tell you that to see how serious and how gross was the fall of Benedict Arnold, such that his name has gone down in history as a great traitor, and that you must remember where he came from– what a great American he was, and how dysfunctional a person can become for a variety of reasons, very slowly, that he permits to be able to start taking his character down.

Well, he did secure the command at West Point. And he began a system of sending men out to forage for wood and for supplies, until he was sending them farther and farther away from the fort, and more and more, such that there were fewer and fewer men were there to defend the fort. He made his proposal in writing to the British when he was ready to start dealing with them, and the basis upon which he would give them the fort, and the amount of money that they would pay him for the betrayal.

Unfortunately, there was a spy, and I think his name was John Andre. He was a British officer. And because he took off his uniform, and was in civilian clothes, he was carrying this document from Benedict Arnold back to the British to make the final deal, and the time when they were to attack. And by the grace of God, he was captured. They found a document in one of his boots. And when the word came to Benedict Arnold at West Point that his contact man had been captured, he fled, leaving behind Peggy, his wife. And of all things, the very day that the attack was to take place, who should show up at West Point to inspect the defenses but General George Washington.

So, Washington is sitting down, having a meal, wondering why Benedict Arnold, the host, has not arrived. And the meal goes on and on, and Washington is curious. He just can't figure it out. But they go, and they make the tour of inspection of the fort. And then when he gets back, they bring him the letter, and they bring him the news: "Benedict Arnold was planning to betray us. He was going to deliver the fort, thus the Hudson River, and thus to split the colonies in two, and almost certainly bring an end to the revolution, delivering the fort to the British."

Washington was, of course, crushed. At first, he couldn't believe it. Peggy, upstairs, was carrying on like she didn't know anything about it – having a fit and a hysteria, and Washington kind-heartedly believed that she was not in on it. So, he told her just to proceed to go meet her husband wherever he was, and he allowed her to leave, though she was up to her curly hair in the whole conspiracy to begin with, as was her husband.

So, how could a man held in such high esteem by General George Washington; one who had demonstrated such heroic service; and, one who had devoted such uncompromising sacrifice of himself in the American cause, become so dysfunctional, and to go down in history, whose very name connotes traitorism, and whose very named connotes betrayal.

He returned to England after the war. He was unwelcome there. People did not trust a traitor. He thought he would be welcomed as a great hero, but instead he was shunned by the very society that he and his socialite wife Peggy wanted to be a part of.

It's ironic to think that, had the bullet that broke his thigh at the battle of Saratoga, gone through his heart previously, he would've gone down in history as one of the great heroes of the American Revolution. But dysfunction changed that 180 degrees overnight.

It was like it would have been for General George Patton in World War II to go over to the Germans. It was that traumatic a shock through the Continental Army, and through the Officer Corp to discover that this man, almost second only to Washington in their esteem, could have done such a thing. George Washington himself was crushed by the betrayal of one so close to him, and so esteemed for his service. But at the same time, he told his man and his officers that the exposure of the plot was an act of divine intervention. And he viewed it as a sign of the favor of God upon the American Revolution, and that their cause would prevail. And that was good insight on the part of Washington – that this which could have been a mortal blow was instead prevented by God, and encouraged these men to continue into a struggle which was so very difficult.

You have to understand that it's one thing to be a farmer with a musket, and another thing to be a trained military man as the British regulars were. They were not on an equal plane. The British were infinitely superior militarily to the Americans. And yet God, piece-by-piece brought together the help – eventually the French and the Spaniards into the picture that made the American Revolution a reality.

So, this is what we're talking about – people who don't work right. How long have you not worked right? How long has it occurred to you that maybe you don't work right – a dysfunctional human being? You enter relationships in life, and they blow up in your face. You pursue things in life, and they don't come to fruition. You pursue things in life that are nothing but disasters.

The Lord Jesus Christ was a Man. While He was God, He was human. The two never mixed. And in his humanity, He is an example of a truly functional person. For that reason, he was victorious over Satan; victorious over the evil world's appeals; and, victorious over the lies of Satan. The qualities of a functional person which characterized Jesus Christ were foretold centuries before – like 800 years before he was born, by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 11:2, where it said that these seven things would characterize the humanity of Jesus Christ, and they are what a functional human being is: "And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and strength; and, the spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord."

The basic quality here is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the person to guide and empower that one in his life's mission for God the Father. Today, this same provision is enjoyed by the church-age believer. Our bodies are now the temple of God. The Spirit of God lives within us. And He is there to give us the power to do things right. He is there to guide us in doing the will of God. Every Christian, at the point of salvation, is permanently indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.

From the ministry of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ came three pairs of virtues which are essential to a functioning human being. We've been looking at these in detail, in order to match ourselves up with them, and to make corrections as necessary. We have come to this from our Colossians 1:9 passage, which gives us two keywords for making us a functional human being. In order to understand what it is that we are pursuing in Colossians, we're looking at this passage in Isaiah.

**Wisdom**

The three couplets of the spirits of normalcy include, first of all, two intellectual virtues. The first is wisdom. This is the ability from God to apply pertinent Bible doctrine from the human spirit storage to the issues at hand. You may know a lot of doctrine, but if you're not in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit, you have zilch. You don't have any wisdom. You don't have any direction. You know the Word of God, but you find that you're not able to apply it.

**Understanding**

Secondly, understanding – this is the ability to discern the truth in a matter relating to people and to life situations. You grasps the reality of the consequences of what you do clearly. This is understanding. This is discernment. This is insight. In earlier times in our country, we used to call this "good horse sense" – to have understanding and discernment. You know where things are going to go when you start on a path.

**Counsel**

The second couplet of virtues includes experiential virtues. Counsel: this is receiving divine viewpoint advice from the Holy Spirit, through various ways, to guide the believers' decision-making process. This is to enable us to avoid the bad advice of God's enemies. And God's enemies are all around us. Some of them are Christians; and, some of them are non-Christians. Counsel is the Spirit of God with a gentle hand advising you. You may want to call it intuition. You may want to call it an insight. Whatever you want to call it (it may be an instinct), it is created by God the Holy Spirit. And after a while, as you walk with Him, you will discover that these thoughts will pop right into your mind. Disorientation will be there. It'll be a caution. It'll be a direction; it'll be a confirmation; and, it'll be an encouragement. And you should not ignore those.

**Strength**

The second part of this couplet is strength. This is the divine power to achieve great things – to get things done in life, primarily for victory in the spiritual warfare as a noble soldier of Jesus Christ. But, obviously, strength in God's service requires a body that works. It requires a physical capacity to do the work of God. And this is interesting – that one of the things that was promised to Jesus Christ would be that he would be a man of physical capacity, and that he would be a man of great physical strength. The etchings and scratching in the catacombs that we have of the pictures that people made of Jesus Christ in those early days, as the word was passed down of what he looked like from those who knew him, show him as a very virile man – with short hair. He didn't have long hair, and if he was one of those people who couldn't wear long hairs, he didn't put a ring in his ear either. There was no sign of feminizing his manhood, as there is today – and it is honored. You might feel sorry for the long-haired guy, and want to give him a few bucks for that barber (maybe he's short of money). But to put a ring in the ear to look like one of the girls is not an honor. And it's a strange thing that that is viewed with esteem, when all it is, is the undermining of one's manhood. And the Bible certainty is very explicitly clear about the long-haired gang.

**Knowledge**

So, we've had intellectual virtues, and we've had experiential virtues. Now we come to the third pair, perhaps coming to the very heart of things. The third pair of virtues are knowledge and the fear of the Lord. The spirit of knowledge – here in the Hebrew language, this refers to personal, experiential information about God. The use of this word is exemplified in Genesis 2:9: "And out of the ground, the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Here was a tree that, in your experience, if you ate of it, would give you information about the contrast between good and evil. Adam and Eve did not know that. All they knew was good. They didn't know evil until they decided to be negative toward God's commandment, and they ate of the tree. Then, to their horror, they discovered the great contrast between what is good and what is evil, and the horrendous results of knowing evil. That is the one thing that they should not have wanted to know.

We get to the New Testament, and what on earth does the apostle Paul Tell us? He closes the magnificent dissertation on human salvation in the book of Romans, and what does he say? He says, "I want you to be innocent concerning evil. And I want you to be wise concerning good." He said, "I want you to be innocent concerning evil." Decodified, that means: "I do not want you to watch Oprah. I do not want you to watch her Geraldo. I do not want you to watch all the crazies, male and female, that run the talk program whose subject matter degenerates the human mind, because it deals with evils. Do you really need to know about those things? Do you really need to know about the depths of perversion that is capable of the human heart? We know enough about the potential of evil from our own example. We certainly don't need to be learning it. And that's exactly what the Word of God says: "Don't learn it." What it says is to learn that which is divine good by your personal experience. That's what you need to know. You don't need to know about the depravity of the sin nature of man.

So, basically God says, "I'm going to give you information. I'm going to tell you things that you would never have known; that you could not know about Me; that you could not know about where the world came from; and, that you could not know about how you work as a human being, and how you must work now that things have become disrupted by sin, and Satan now controls the world that I made for you. Now I have to give you some instruction on how you can live in that world, or everything is going to blow up in your face. Every human relationship you enter is going to come apart, because you don't know how to live by the principles that are now in force because of what has happened in the Garden of Eden." This is information about the nature of God. It is information about what's right, and what's wrong – the whole bit of everything that now is being undermined in our day, and all of the things that are being dismissed. Truth is being treated as falsehood. This is being done in all areas of life today by Satan.

There is a man who was in the CIA for many years, that the government of the United States has been passing off. He used to be a former KGB member, but he was not the ordinary run-of-the-mill. He was in the inner circle. He wrote a book called New Lies for Old. Anatoliy Golitsyn is his name. Golitsyn defected, and he came to the Americans many years ago. He said, "The communists have a plan, and I want to tell you what it is." They understand that they're not going to be able to impose a world government under socialism the way they're going. They're not going to be able to bring about world communism. So, they have devised a plan.

At some point in history, the leader, which proved to be Mikhail Gorbachev in time, is going to pretend that they have to change things. And what he does, they're going to pretend, has brought everything apart, and they're going to have the nations that are under their control now turn loose in Eastern Europe, and they're going to pretend that all of this has taken place, and it's out of their hands. They're going to have counter revolutions. And that happened with Yeltsin, as you know. And the counter-revolutionaries are going to be brought down, but they won't be killed, because they're part of the plan. They're in on the scam. And after they're in prison for a while, they'll be released, and they'll be given positions of great responsibility and wealth in a new government.

Well, I won't go too far afield on that, except to say that he had about 199 things that he said were going to happen. And it's going to be one of the greatest deceptions, and the Americans would say, "Communism is dead." And they will pour billions of dollars into the country while the communists are realigning themselves; regrouping; restrengthening their military; and, getting ready to gradually make an end run to get the people of the world so forgetful of their spiritual and Christian heritage, that they will go for government taking care of them, and they will be pliable to acceptance of socialism, no matter how much tyranny that implies.

Have you wondered why people today have been repeatedly saying, on public television discussion, that the government of the United States now is deceptive; it's deceitful; it's oppressive; its taxations are greater than ever; its regulations are worse than ever; and, the bureaucracy is more arrogant? But what do the people want? Most of them want to reelect the government. They know what it is, but, like one man I heard, said, "It hasn't hurt me. They're doing all right for me."

So, the slaves have come a long way to being mentally prepared for the acceptance of that kind of tyranny. Because of the powers, whatever they be, in the American government, and the intelligence community, Golitsyn has been given the back of the hand. He had something like 90% of everything he told us many years ago was going to come to pass, has taken place. The whole plan is unraveling before our eyes now. And this man, of course is in hiding. He has to communicate through intermediaries, because his life isn't worth Fig Newton, because of what he's exposing, because he was on the inside where they made the plans. He was part of the guy who made this plan, so he knows it from start to finish.

Truth: is it accepted? No. A dysfunctional human being will not accept what is true. And the same is true in spiritual things. Who gets mad at the pastor-teacher? Those who don't want to accept what the Word of God says. There was a recent article on being a good Berean. The Berean who listens is informed, and then checks the Word of God, and then makes his decision. And I'm appreciative of those of you who have been expressing your kindness and your appreciation for this particular series of being a functional human being. One person sent me a card of encouragement. It was very wise. You would be surprised how many people don't like what they've been hearing recently, because it touches the very core of what we are, and our failures to come up to what we should be as Christians. The truth (the knowledge) is not something you would think would be welcome, even though it's the Word of God that says that it is the truth that's going to make you free.

This word "knowledge" in the Hebrew is also applied to technical information for a craftsman, to get the idea of what we're dealing with. Here in Exodus 31:3, for example, speaking of the craftsman here: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding; in knowledge; and, in all kinds of craftsmanship." These people who had to produce the temple, and the tabernacle (which would eventually which would become the temple) – they had to have technical information. They had to have the knowledge of how to use the tools, and the technology for what they were going to do. Here it is applied to the fact that these people had gone to school with God. He gave them knowledge. They found that they put it together, and figured it out.

Spiritual knowledge is given by the Holy Spirit to the church-age believer. This is the point in John 16:12-15, where Jesus promises the spiritual knowledge will come to us after He is gone, via God the Holy Spirit, and will be written down in Scripture. Jesus says, "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak. And He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you." The Holy Spirit's information comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, who gets it from God the Father: "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He takes of Mine, and I will disclose it to you."

So, we're talking here about what a functional person is, is that he has spiritual knowledge – doctrine. He knows the principles of the Word of God. Okay, now you look out across the churches as you know them, and as you're acquainted with them, and you tell me how many churches you think this very day are making people functional human beings by what they're giving in that service. Or are they, by the very fact of what they're giving them, causing them to be malfunctions – to become dysfunctional human beings? That's the sad part. Most of the time, you go to church, and what you get makes you dysfunctional.

Here is knowledge to the church age believer. It is divine information which is received via the grace system of perception – that system which is laid out in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16. It goes from the Bible, to the pastor-teacher, down through the system of instruction in the local church. It is God who has the omniscience and the information that a man needs. We don't get it from looking from within ourselves like the new agers tell us, or like Hindus tell us. We get it from a source outside of ourselves, which is the revelation of God, which is then recorded accurately and inerrantly in Scripture. Psalm 139:1-6 tell us about the knowledge of omniscience which God shares with us: "Oh Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down, and when I rise up."

I'm currently getting some information together to give parents about their teenage children, and the matter of dating. These are teenagers who haven't completed high school yet, so they are really on the very borderline of child level, and the borderline to maturity. And the American custom of dating is not done, usually, in other parts of the world. And there are enormous hazards that now research has demonstrated in solo-dating. And this is an ever-present difficulty. We notice it even when we take a campout – that we have a pool of human beings, but we have solo-dating within the pool. And Mr. Short and I have been going over this problem, and some of the things we're going to plan to do about that, so that we are not party to something that is dysfunctional. But in any case, whether you should be dating or not, it's always important to know that God is there when I sit down, and when I rise up.

So, two Christians are going out on a date. Two Christians never go out on a date. There's always three. And if your kid is below college level, then when he goes out on the date, you should be there with him. That's called chaperoning. How's that for a ball of worms? But that's how people used to do it. They had relationships in groups. And that's the policy of the Berean Youth Clubs, and we have not been as careful about that in recent years. We've been negligent. So, we've cast some wrong signals that I'm going to try to correct.

However, God has the information to give, and He knows about us because He's there. Psalm 139:1-6: "You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path, and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, the Lord knows it all. You have enclosed me behind, and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is too high. I cannot attain to it." Now, you've had that experience as the Word of God comes through you. Some principle of the Scripture (some doctrinal function) comes through to you, and you want to say, "Hallelujah." And a lot of the hallelujah and the praise of God that the Charismatics do is contrived. It's fake. But it's not wrong to do that. And I know that, sooner or later, you're going to be hit with some magnificent portion of the Word of God. And your heart is going to say, "Hallelujah," and you can just say it out loud if you want to.

What is that? It is the awesomeness of the information that God gives us. And here it is in this book. All you need is a pulpit – a local church that has a sense to understand it, and a pastor-teacher that's free to preach it, and to teach it. And that congregation goes to the top of the list in the human race.

It is God alone who teaches us true spiritual knowledge. There's no other source except God alone. Psalm 94:10 points that out to us: "He who chastens the nations will not rebuke; even he who teaches man knowledge." Yes, God is going to rebuke nations, because He has given knowledge to His people.

Then there's that magnificent longest (Psalm 119), as Psalm 119:66 says, "Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Your commandments." Give me the information, O Lord, that You have. It is doctrine which is the expression of God's divine viewpoint knowledge. And this is the information that's essential for functioning in life.

Now, don't think that you're going to have a problem, and then go to the pastor or some counselor, and say, "Here's my problem. Could you give me a Scripture verse?" That's not going to work. If he's a conman, he'll give you a Scripture verse. But if he's not, he will tell you that there's a bigger issue, and what you have is a failure of background.

Do you see why it's important to be in church every service – that you're building line-upon-line, and precept-upon-precept, here-a-little, there-a-little, as Isaiah 28:10 says. That's the only way that you're going to finally break out from the disorientation of Satan's world system. God the Holy Spirit will illuminate spiritual phenomena to the spiritual believer, but that believer has to be taught the Word of God before the Holy Spirit can illuminate it. What you don't know can't be made understandable to you. No one can be a normal human being, functioning effectively in life, without a deep knowledge of doctrine from Scriptures. That's a divine viewpoint mentality. It is the knowledge of doctrine which guides a person into successful living. And it is a knowledge of doctrine which warns him about self-destructive conduct.

This is demonstrated by one of the Old Testament prophets. Hosea 4:1-2 says, "Listen to the Word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land. There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence so that bloodshed follows bloodshed." Here, God is warning Israel not to be friends with the pagan enemy about them. He said, "These people do not have a knowledge of God." What does He mean? They don't know basic principles of doctrine. So, what do they do? They're swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence so that bloodshed follows bloodshed. This kind of a society came to epitome of course just before the flood. We can't imagine what a horrible, terrible condition that was. But those without the knowledge of the Word of God – that's what they do.

Who are the people who give terrible problems in our society today? What about the people who blew up TWA 800, maybe from a ground-to-air missile? Wouldn't that be a development? How are you going to control that at the check-in encounter? Do you think those people were people who were filled with the knowledge of God? They think they are, probably. They have a God, but it's not the God of Scripture. Those who have a knowledge of God are not murdering innocent people.

What you have is the problem of religious zeal without the knowledge of doctrine. And what that leads to is a brutal fanaticism. It's a vain pursuit of accomplishing good by human effort. Romans 10:1-3 lays this out for us: "Brethren, my heart's desire, and my prayer to God for them (Israel) is their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge." They have bad doctrine, but they're zealous for God: "For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." And the Jews, to this very day, who reject Jesus Christ still believe that they can establish their own righteousness, and they're all going to go into the lake of fire.

The quality of divine mental attitude love, which is central to all human relationships, so that those relationships are not brutal, is only possible in the person with the knowledge of doctrine. If a person does not have mental attitude love functioning, that is a bad person to be related to.

So, why do you marry somebody who knows not God or His Word? A Christian has two things that he has to be concerned about in any close relationship: marriage; or, anything else. First of all, is that this person is a born-again believer. Secondly, that this person is at your quality spiritually. And I watch men and women constantly marrying people who are beneath them spiritually. And you wonder: what on earth is going on in their heads such that they would do such a thing, because it's only going to be disaster? You can count on it, unless the grace of God comes in, and a great miracle of change comes about. This business of knowledge is where it's at. If you don't know the principles of doctrine, you're a dangerous person, and you're totally dysfunctional, and you're going to grief into somebody's life.

Philippians 1:9, "And this I pray: that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and in all discernment." Did you notice that translation, "real knowledge?" I'm going to get to that. That's a special word for knowledge. That's what we're headed for in Colossians. It's not just ordinary information. This is the knowledge that we're talking about here – that functional knowledge.

Then there's John 15:15. Jesus says, "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing. But I've called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you." Knowledge is available to the believer.

Drop down of John 15:21-22, "But all these things they will do to you for My Namesake because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sinned. But now they have no excuse for their sin." This is why people who know the Word of God; who have not received the gospel; and, who have received instruction in the Word of God are going to have more suffering in hell than those who did not.

John 15:23-24. "He who hates Me, hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sinned. But now they have both seen and hated Me, and My Father as well." Jesus said, "If I hadn't confirmed by My very works, the message of truth, it wouldn't be so bad for them. But because I've confirmed it, things are going to be terrible for them in the lake of fire.

The false knowledge of human viewpoint perverts the mind, and that is what leads people into great evil – false knowledge. In Isaiah 47:10, the prophet says, "And you felt secure in your wickedness," he said. "No one sees Me. Your wisdom and your knowledge – they have deluded you. For you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one beside me.'" False knowledge – that deceives you, and that's what the world gives you. That's what your friends give you. That's what all these people that you socialize with give you. That's what your stupid family gives you, who's out of touch with the Word of God. Why are you listening to people like that instead of listening to the God who really loves you?

During the millennium, under the Lord Jesus Christ, the world will be a wonderful place, simply because divine viewpoint knowledge will dominate the thinking of all mankind. During the millennium, there'll be very few dysfunctional human beings. Habakkuk 2:14 and Isaiah 11:9 describe what a wonderful time in human history this is all going to be, because they're not going to have all these dysfunctional people.

Nothing in life, then, is more important or valuable to a person than the knowledge of doctrine. Man's mind and God's mind will then have the same content. Proverbs 8:10: "Take My instruction, and not silver; and, knowledge, rather than choice gold." That's the most valuable thing you can have. Human reason is divinely fashioned to apprehend the knowledge of God recorded in the Bible, and learned from the indwelling teacher of the Holy Spirit. That's a great combination – you have a mind that can learn divine viewpoint phenomenon.

The religions of the world are designed by Satan. Therefore, they do not have an in inerrant Scripture containing the knowledge of God the Creator. Only the Christian can say, "Thus says the Lord," and know that it's true. He can speak for God because the Scriptures are the truth.

You've been seeing the Mormon's advertising on TV of the other testament of Jesus Christ. It's a lie. The Quran propagated, by the Muslims as the Word of God – it's a lie. The god Gavita of the Hindus as the wisdom of God – it's a lie. All of the other sacred writings of the world are filled with good thoughts, including the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, but they're filled with things that are deceptions, and that are wrong. Only the Bible gives you a book in which there are no deceptions. Satan forms religions which seek information from demons; from their dead ancestors; from animals; and, from looking within themselves. And I notice that the dumbest people are the ones who want to look in themselves for information. And the smartest ones don't trust themselves. Isn't that interesting?

These religions have no personal God. They have a Star Wars force. There is no God who is capable of communicating knowledge. So, what does Satan do? He creates false Bibles. He creates human speculation, and all these human speculations have no prophetic confirmation. If the Quran were the Word of God, it would be filled with predictions of the future to confirm that it is the Word of God, like the Bible is. The Bible makes predictions 800 or 1,000 years ahead of time, and it all comes to pass. None of these religions of the world have books that do that, because they're made by men. Thank God that you have knowledge. And here it is. And you've accumulated a big chunk of it today.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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