***Full Knowledge

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-081***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," number 15 in Colossians 1:9-14.

Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Timothy 2:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for proof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."

Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scripture, we might have hope. For you have been born-again, not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable; that is, through the living and abiding Word of God."

2 Timothy 4:2-5, "Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season; reprove; rebuke; exhort with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but, wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now, and to the day of eternity. Amen."

Once Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, they fell out of step with the thinking and the will of God. They, therefore, became dysfunctional people who resisted God's divine viewpoint, and gravitated towards Satan's human viewpoint disorientation. All the posterity of Adam and Eve have been born, consequently, devoid of divine viewpoint, and filled by the sin nature with human viewpoint minds. The godly, such as Abel, held a world view which was centered on God as the final authority and the final law-giver, while the ungodly, such as Cain, had a world view centered on man as the final authority and the rule-maker. As history unfolded, the world view of Satan increasingly predominated the vile, pre-flood civilization until it was described by God as something that had descended to the level that He could no longer tolerate. Therefore, He decided to eliminate it in the great world Flood.

Genesis 6:5-7: "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in his heart. Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked on the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. And, behold, I'm about to destroy them with the earth." It was clear that man had become, from a perfect creature in the image of God, to something terribly dysfunctional. And that problem has come down to us to this day.

We have probably been studying, at this point in the book of Colossians, some of the most important Scriptures to be found in the Word of God for you. And those of you who have been attending faithfully have been building idea upon idea, and you will find in the future how enormously blessed you were by being here for this series. Some of you have been so impressed that you have sent me cards and thank-you notes, and have alerted me to the fact that something very special is taking place in your own personal life because of what you've been learning. Others have caught on to the direction that the Word of God was taking us, and have, I suspect, made special plans to absent themselves – to get out from under the gun. All of that indicates once more the dysfunctional character that possesses American society today.

Today, everyone is born into the human race with a deficiency of the soul in terms of God's point of view. Man is thus by nature a dysfunctional creature dominated by the thinking and the ways of the sin nature which we have inherited from Adam. Those who are regenerated spiritually by their faith in Jesus Christ to save them need to fill their minds with the divine viewpoint of Bible doctrine. We need to get over our natural incapacity to think the way God thinks. As divine viewpoint replaces our human viewpoint, as believers, a person gradually becomes a functional human being in the pattern of the humanity of Jesus. He then lives a meaningful life in time, and in eternity – to live a meaningful life now, and to have a meaningful experience (an enriched experience) in eternity. That is no small thing. That is what the Christian life is all about. And there is going to be (make no mistake about it) very great difference in heaven in terms of what we have done with our lives in the enrichment of that eternity.

**Full Knowledge**

The key to being in step with God is a kind of knowledge the Bible calls the "full knowledge" of Bible doctrine in the believer's human spirit. Paul prays that the Colossian Christians would be filled with the knowledge of doctrine. And it is important that you become well-acquainted with the word "epignosis" (the "~g" is silent when pronounced). It is that special word in the Greek Bible: "epignosis" (ep-ig'-no-sis), E P I G N O S I S. It's not just "gnosis." There are people who have spent years in church, listening to instruction; or, in Sunday school classes. And they have all kinds of knowledge of the Word of God. But "gnosis" knowledge does you no good. It is knowledge that has to be transformed into full knowledge (or real knowledge), and the Bible describes that with the word "epignosis."

This word connotes more than mere "gnosis" doctrinal information that you may have been taught. It is full knowledge in the sense that it now powerfully influences the knower because he believes it. That's the difference of this word. It's a word of knowledge that takes hold of your life. It grabs you, and it does something tremendous to you in your life. Mere information will sit up there, and it won't do anything. But once you say "Amen" to a principle of doctrine that you have been taught, that information becomes suddenly dramatically transformed. This positive volition belief transforms "gnosis" information into "epignosis," which then influences your mind, and that in turn influences your emotions and your will. "Epignosis," in other words, is usable knowledge which you can use to get in step with God.

Now, Adam and Eve had this all the time. Once they sinned, they were out of step. And their sin natures kept reducing their capacity to walk with God, until they got back on track with the "epignosis" of God. This is a critical principle for every human being who is a Christian to understand. And yet, it is rarely spoken of.

How many churches do you think around you are teaching people this critical word of full knowledge that commands an influence upon your life that is almost beyond your control. The only way you get it is that somebody has taught you a principle of doctrine, and you have said, "Amen, I believe it." And suddenly, that information puts you on a plane far above all other human beings – capable, now, of doing right. When people don't do right, it's because they are not possessed in their minds by "epignosis." It's just that simple.

A hearer of the Word of God has "gnosis" knowledge, but a doer of doctrine has the "epignosis" of full knowledge. And that's what James 1:22 means: "But prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." James is not saying that these people don't have a knowledge of doctrine. They are hearers. They have learned it; they have been there; and, they have been instructed. But they think that they have something. And he says, "You're diluting yourself. You have nothing;" that is, because, unless that knowledge grabs hold of you, and now takes control of your life because you have said "yes" to it by an act of your own positive volition (you have said, "Amen"), then you've agreed with God, but not before that.

Now you understand that. We all understand that. We sit in church, and we hear instruction in the Word of God, and sometimes the pastor-teacher gives us an implication of the Word of God, and that hits us. Woo, we don't like that implication. And all of a sudden, we have a mental reservation about the principle being taught. In our minds, we have a reservation. What have you said? You said, "No. Amen." You've rejected a principle of truth, and all of a sudden, all you have is (up in your learning mentality) some information. It happens to be true probably, but because you're digging your heels in with reservations about it, it does you absolutely no good. It's not "epignosis" (controlling knowledge).

That happens all the time. And sometimes I've had people say to me, "I really don't think that you should make these implications, and say things like that, and make me feel guilty." And they don't catch on that maybe it's the Spirit of God that's making them feel guilty, and they are uneasy. Well, you will feel uneasy. You're His child. You're the child of the Father. The Holy Spirit is going to make you feel very uncomfortable when you have these mental reservations about something that is true; or, an application that you don't like.

However, remember that you are your own priest, and you can do as you choose. And also remember that someday, we will find out whether you were right or wrong in your attitude. It is incumbent upon every believer to feed regularly on the word of doctrine in order to avoid becoming dysfunctional, and thereby, going spiritually insane. You never can cease feeding upon the Word of God. It takes every Sunday, and then some. And this is why those who are negligent, violating the principle that is enunciated in Hebrews 10:25 of: "Assembling ourselves together, and not neglecting that assembling of ourselves" – people who are negligent upon attending church services, are very spotty are short on "epignosis." They are short on the information to begin with. They have nothing to go positive with. And when they are have mental reservations, they're in very sad condition. They know to do better, but they can't. It's not just that they won't – they can't.

Here the Word of God says, "Don't steal; don't take from what is not yours; and, don't steal by not paying your bills." And somebody thinks, "Oh, I have this bill to pay, but I don't want to pay it," for reason or another. And what do they do? Immediately, they put throw up negative flack against that principle of doctrine, and they justify why they should be thieves. So, suddenly the principle of not stealing does not work. And a person does not have "epignosis" knowledge about that moral principle. Therefore, they're incapable of obeying it, and they become thieves.

You can go run your mind right through all the 10 commandments. And don't forget the principles are all repeated in the New Testaments, so those principles of righteousness apply to us. Go through every one of them. And every time you break them, it's because somebody wasn't quite sure that that's what it meant.

**Situation Ethics**

When the Episcopalian Bishop Joseph Fletcher came to that problem, and had people's guilt overturning their backs upon the principles of the 10 Commandments, he came up with that which was a few years ago known as "situation ethics". And he said, "The problem is that people don't understand how to read the 10 commandments: and that what the 10 commandments are saying is that this is the general principle *ordinarily*, but there are exceptions.

So, when you read, "Thou shalt not murder," he says, "You must add the word 'ordinarily' afterward: 'Thou shalt not murder ordinarily.'" Now, that's willful, first-degree taking the life of another person: "Thou shalt not murder ordinarily, unless you have a terribly talkative mother-in-law who comes and stays with you. Then it doesn't apply." The same applies to: "Thou shalt not commit adultery – well, ordinarily." And bingo! There was the crack opened such that you must decide now whether you are in a loving condition, and this does not apply to you at this point. Well boy, the liberal world went bananas. They grabbed it. Situation ethics became the talk of the town, and became the code of many churches, adjusting to our 20th century outlook.

Now, this is what makes the difference between information in the head, and information which controls you that has been placed in your human spirit – your point of God-consciousness. Here's the mechanics of the working of full knowledge – usable divine viewpoint knowledge. No one is born into the world with a divine viewpoint mentality which is essential for fulfilling God's perfect will that He already has fore-ordained for your life, before you were ever conceived.

The sin nature has exactly the opposite effect. The sin nature has exactly the opposite frame of reference, which is expressed as human viewpoint, which opposes the mind of God at every stage. The mind of man, the apostle Paul tells us, in 1 Corinthians 1:21: "Man, by his wisdom, knew not God." You cannot think your way through to what is right and to what is pleasing to God by your human rational capacities.

Thomas Aquinas, one of the fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, was a terrific influence, and he made a very serious error that was instilled into Catholic doctrine. Thomas Aquinas said, "Yes, when man fell, he was contaminated. He was depraved in every respect, but his mind was not completely depraved. His mind can still think its way to what is right, and to what pleases God." He totally ignored the fact that the Word of God says that there is none that seeks after me – no, not one. Romans 3:10: "There is none righteous, no not one." That means that there is nobody who thinks right – not one.

Well, out of that came all of these rational processes that have created the doctrine of Roman Catholicism, which is totally in opposition to what the Bible teaches, but is justified because the mind of man has reasoned itself to this. No, the apostle Paul is right. Man, by wisdom, knew not God. Also, there is that passage that says, "Thinking themselves to be wise." These, in Romans 1:22, it says, "They had the knowledge of doctrine, but because they thought they were wise, they readjusted it, and they became fools." Now, that is what happens when a principle of truth is given to you, and you arch your back and reject it. Negative volition is a devastating thing in the life of a believer. And the younger you are, the worse it is because you have a longer life to botch up.

Nobody is born with God's thinking. Most people in American society today function on human viewpoint that comes up from the sin nature. Therefore, they are anti-God; they are anti-Bible; and, they are anti-Christian. Who on earth would've thought, a few years ago, that American society would come to the point where it was debating whether it should kill unborn children – whether it should murder unborn children. 32 million murderers later, and 32 million wonderful, little Americans lost, with all their capacity, and all that they would have provided to our society, we are still having national conventions and national parties who are writing their political platforms, and are fighting over whether it's all right to murder the unborn child, as if God had never spoken in Psalm 139 about the subject, and as if there were no realization that what had been conceived was a human being from the moment of conception in the image of God. It was not a frog; not a dog; and, not a pig. And it was only going to eventuate in a full-blown human being.

American society operates on human viewpoint. Therefore, you should be very careful about the people you associate with. You should understand that the friends of the world system of Satan are the enemies of God. The Bible makes that very clear. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. So, these people are anti-God. They are people that you and I know. They are anti-Bible, and they are anti-Christian.

So, if you follow the opinions of society; the opinions of your peers; and, your circle of associates, their ways and their values will always lead you away from God. They have the fashions of the world, and they have, consequently, the wisdom of man. This is what Paul warns us about in Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world." Do not cut out your life in the pattern of this world: "But be transformed (be completely changed) by the renewing of your mind." Do you see what we're after? We are after your mental attitude toward doctrine. How do you renew the mind? Through the Word of God: "By the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is – that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Now that's pretty sobering. Any human being who is not well filled with "epignosis" knowledge in his human spirit cannot know the will of God. And I'm sorry to say that that probably covers most churches and the Christians who worship there. They never get instruction in the deep things of the Word of God. They are never capable of coming anywhere near the will of God. So, they live useless lives.

The viewpoint of American society, furthermore, is, in large measure, the product of the secular school system that we now face. And when we begin a new school year, it is well that we remind ourselves that, from the lowest to the highest levels of education in this country, it is anti-God; anti-Bible; and, anti-Christian. The Goals 2000 people in the current department of education is now promoting a principle that they want to incorporate to turn into law – that all school boards must provide all day kindergarten, and that it is required attendance. You must attend all-day kindergarten. Why would they want to do that? In order, at the earliest possible age, to instill the minds of the children with these anti-God attitudes. That's the only reason for it – and to pull children away from parents who may be directing them toward biblical concepts. This is the basis of disorientation in America today. It's the school system from one end to the other.

Just think for one moment what happens in a Christian school when a child walks in, and the day begins. In a Christian school like Berean Christian Academy, the first thing they do is study the Bible. The whole day begins with an orientation that God is out there; that He is not silent; that He has spoken to us; and, that He is the authority. What He says is the way it is. What He tells us is the way we will do it, unless we too want to become fools.

So, right off the bat, what an ennobling experience – to start your day in a classroom where you begin with the obvious implication that the most important subject in this day is going to be the Bible. That's why it's upfront – that the most important thing we're going to study is the Word of God, and then to see it brought in all day long. It is not only brought into the subject matter, but brought into one's experience. The kid who steps out of line; who is not up to the patterns of the Word of God; who breaks the rules; who is devious; who is getting around doing what is right; who is insulant; who is whatever it takes to show his sin nature – the kid is told, "Wait a minute. In this school you can't act like that. We are here to supervise you and to guard you in behalf of your parents and before God.

In the secular school system they won't look at that twice. They'll look the other way. They will not begin the day with the Word of God. Nor will there be any Word of God anywhere during that day. In the Christian school, after the Bible class, the whole day is taught with the frame of reference (the world view) of theistic creationism. In the secular school, there is no Bible instruction. You cannot even put up the 10 commandments in a classroom, and you can't say anything about them. You can't post them. That's illegal. Therefore, it develops a world view of evolutionary humanism. Make no mistake about it, that in a Christian school, the curriculum and the environment, all day long, lead a child to God and to His will. In the secular school, the curriculum and the environment, all day long, lead a child away from God, and acclimate him to Satan's world system. You cannot have it both ways. And you cannot beat the system the way it is set up.

Therefore, it is no marvel and no wonder that American society is where it is today – that the grossest evils can be performed by people in public prominence and in public authority, and everybody smiles and condones. As long as you're a famous athlete, you can get away with anything that an ordinary person might be criticized for. The whole system is that Satan is honored because the school system creates that. And not the least of the problem is (I hope you noticed I used the word "environment) if some kid in our school comes and tells us that somebody's using a swear word, or somebody is saying something inappropriate, or doing something inappropriate, you can count on the fact we're not going to forget those parents. We're going come to grips with that guy or with that gal. We're going to bring them to task. In a public school, it's commonplace. Nobody thinks about the evils as being out of line. This is the thing to do.

So, there's a big difference in American society, and the schools are largely responsible for it. And the more sophisticated they make the schools, like these charter schools now, and the more elitist impression they give, parents have to remember that there is still no Bible; there is no prayer; and, there is even no respecting holidays like Easter and Christmas with what they mean. They can't escape the fact that those are there, and that people are conscious of it, so they make a deliberate attempt to distort it away from having its biblical significance.

I was at one of the public schools here in Irving about a year ago at Easter time, walking down the hall. Now, it's commonplace that our bulletin boards are covered with things relative to Easter; the resurrection; and, the whole meaning of the season. And as I walked down this hall, here was this big display, as you came in. It was a huge bulletin board, and there was this bunny, and he was sitting next to a basket full of colored eggs. And it said, across the top, "Be a good egg. Happy Easter."

Now if that isn't a travesty and a perversion! But it was a nice concise example of leading a child away from God. It happens the moment you walk in, until you walk out that day, and it begins the next day, and comes back around. Parents at home are fighting uphill. And the worst thing is that they know that nobody is going to be there watching the righteousness of their children, because the system accepts unrighteousness as the norm.

Now, when one is born-again spiritually, he does not automatically possess divine viewpoint knowledge. He is filled with human viewpoint by nature. He is spiritually empty. He has just been born-again. He's just barely escaped the lake of fire. The apostle Paul, therefore, prays for these Colossian Christians – that they would steadily replace their human viewpoint knowledge with God's divine viewpoint full knowledge, which will lead to great spiritual insights, and to transformation of their lives.

**The Grace System of Perception**

The Christian's natural divine viewpoint deficiency is to be filled with this "epignosis" knowledge – doctrine which has been learned from the pastor-teacher through the grace system, and believed (a positive response to what you have been taught.) It's important that you understand this system. I'm amazed that every time we run through this . . ., especially if we have visitors, they come up, and it's like they're revolutionized – how all of a sudden, it makes sense why they go to church, and why they learn the Word of God. And it is important that you be able to explain that to people. This is the grace system of perception. The reason we call it grace is because it doesn't matter what your IQ is. It is important that you understand that. What matters is how big a positive volition you have, and how much instruction you have in the Word of God.

You have the communicator. He teaches the Bible via the HICEE ("high C" technique) system which takes into account the grammar, and the language, and the meaning of words, and the background of the time, and so on. And he takes into account the principle of doctrine that comes out of that kind of study. He puts it together. In other words, he interprets the Bible under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But he has to have some background information in order to get into the real language of Scripture. 2 Timothy 4:2, says, "Preach the Word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction." Preach the Word. That is the duty of every Christian. You can't preach it if you don't know it. And it says, "Be ready in season and out of season" – whether you get the flak from people; or, whether people come up and write you notes and say, "That was great, and that helped me." You have to use the Word of God as your frame of reference to reprove; to rebuke; and, to exhort. You do it with patience, and you do it with instruction. After all, what people decide, they will bear the consequences. So, they should be treated with consideration of what they may be bringing down upon their own heads.

Titus 1:9 says, "Holding fast the faithful Word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine, and to refute those who contradict." This is the duty of the pastor-teacher. That's what this verse is applying to. But it is also applicable to every believer. This is "gnosis" knowledge when you have learned it. Here it is in what we describe as the learning capacity you have. You learn it. There it is: "gnosis." It's information. But that's all it is. Until you have made a decision as to how you're going to receive it, that's all it is. It's information, like anything else. Here's the rule. Now, you ponder, "Am I going to obey the rule, or am I going to disobey the rule?" Here's the rule. That's all the information you have. And this is "gnosis" which the Holy Spirit enables you to learn because you're in temporal fellowship. You have to be a Christian. You can't learn anything in the Word of God unless you're a Christian. But if you are, then the Holy Spirit, if you are in fellowship with Him, because you have no fractures of your fellowship with Him, then, as a spiritual Christian, you will learn the Word of God.

John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." That's a great promise. The Holy Spirit who indwells me is my teacher. He enables me to understand spiritual things. Without Him, I'll never understand spiritual things. But here it is. The pastor-teacher has taught a principle of doctrine on the basis of the authority of the Word of God, and you have learned it. The Holy Spirit has made it clear to you. This "gnosis" knowledge is now stored up here. You've learned it, but you can't do anything with it. Now, the believer decides, "Yes, I accept that. I go positive to the doctrine learned." And through an act of faith, here in the Word of God, he makes it usable knowledge.

Hebrews 4:2: "For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also. But the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard." Here the writer is speaking about the Exodus generation. And he's comparing the Jews of the New Testament times, who are going back to the Mosaic system and the rituals. And the writer (perhaps the apostle Paul wrote this book, but whoever) said, "We today have instruction in the Word of God, just as the Exodus generation in Moses' day did. And this good news was preached to us also, but it didn't profit them back there. Instead of going into the Promised Land, they all died in the desert, because of what? Because they did not have faith. They didn't take the information that was given to them from God, and they did not believe it. God said, "Go into this Promised Land. I'll take down the Canaanites, and all the rest of them. None of them will be able to stand up against you. You will be victorious. You will defeat every one of them. Go."

The majority of 10 came back and said, "We can't. We're like grasshoppers. These are big guys. They'll knock us over. We can't do it. Two of them, Caleb and Joshua, said, "No, no, no. God has said that we will go. We are positive to His Word." What was the difference? The 10 had "gnosis." They had the promise of God, and they didn't believe it. The two had "epignosis." They had taken their knowledge, and converted it to full, powerful, controlling knowledge. That was a difference.

So, the writer says, "Because it was not united by faith in those who heard." That's it. Now, this is very subtle. About the time you think you're saying that you accept something in the Word of God, you'd be surprised how something creeps up in your life, and all of a sudden you take a step, and it shows that you don't believe that. You demonstrate that you are not trusting God in terms of that particular thing that He has said.

So, here the believer can go positive or negative. If he goes positive, this knowledge now becomes intensified, because it now becomes something that is full knowledge. It is pure knowledge. It is controlling knowledge. That is the great difference. It is now knowledge (information) that controls him. So, it is transferred to the human spirit, which acts as a reservoir of divine viewpoint. Why the human spirit? Because the human spirit is our point of contact with the living God.

This is indicated to us, for example, in Job 32:8: "But it is a spirit in man (his human spirit), and the breath of the Almighty that gives him understanding." There is a human spirit in man, and the breath of God gives him understanding. Now, what is inspiration? The word means "God-breathed." God breathed what? God breathed doctrinal truth! And that's what the writer here of Job is saying as well. He's saying that the spirit of man is the point of contact with God. That's his God consciousness. He has information given to him by God.

This is also stated in Romans 8:16, "The Spirit Himself (God the Holy Spirit) bears witness with our human spirit that we are the children of God." You can't be more explicit than that. God the Holy Spirit tells our human spirits what is the truth, and we, through what He tells us (through doctrine), know that we're the children of God. We are not the children of God by some feeling. We're the children of God on the base of our understanding a doctrinal principle.

So, when you say yes to the information, that knowledge becomes transformed here into "epignosis." Now it's down deep inside your human spirit. It is there as a point of contact for your mind, and for your mind to work upon your emotions and your will. This is real knowledge. This is what we're talking about in Colossians 1:9-10: "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it (your love), we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled (taking care of a deficiency) with the full knowledge (the "epignosis" knowledge) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord; to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." We haven't gotten to the rest of that, but you see where we're going. From "epignosis" comes everything in life that's worthwhile. From being taught the Word of God and being receptive to it – that's it. There is nothing else in life that's important. If you don't have that, you're going to muddle around all your life, and you're going to blow your life in a useless way.

With this knowledge now from the human spirit as need arises, God the Holy Spirit, for the Christian (once more) who is filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18: "Be filled with the Spirit."), up to your directive mind (the capacity of making decisions) comes a principle of doctrine. Now, because you have said yes, then the first time you're attempted to break one of the moral laws, up comes some of the information from God. That information takes hold of your mind, and your mind tells your emotions, "No" in spiritual things. Your mind tells your emotions what to do if it's a matter of something temporal. Your mind is what controls the emotions and the will. Don't say, "I can't help myself because I'm just like this." No, you're not like this. You may be like that – you're sin nature is like that, but you don't have to be like that. You don't have to be what you are by nature. All of that can be transformed. But if you don't have this full knowledge here, you have nothing.

So, are we so crazy here at Berean Church when we deal with young people, such that we go after their minds and education? Are we such idiots in our youth clubs that we are seeking young people who want to be participants in a spiritual adventure? It is not a YMCA. It is not turning this gym into a big fun activity center, and thus degrading the facility that God gave us, but saying, "We are here to have a little fun, but we are here, first of all, to study God's Word. As we do in our Berean Youth Club meetings, the first thing we do, for the first 30 minutes, is a study of the Word of God. And the achievement program – the whole bit: why are we doing that? Because we're saying that if we teach young people doctrine, and they have an open heart (mind) to it, which usually they do, then they have stored the capacity to beat the devil right down there within themselves. Their human spirits are filled with the ability to meet the world; to meet Satan; and, to deal with their own sin natures. They will know how to act, and they will be receptive to the information of people who are older and wiser.

I was very impressed, with that last creation video we had with the Creation Research Society, where it showed us how, when people lived hundreds and hundreds of years, people had an enormous amount of information. And these lives of these great men were overlapping, and they knew things because it was not just knowledge they had attained, but they had experience. I've been thinking recently: "Wouldn't it be fun if you could go back to a certain point of your life, where you're a kid (maybe high school), and you know everything now. You don't forget anything that you've had. And you're going to walk through the same pattern. You're going to meet the same people. You're going to do the same things. You're going to go down the same Colorado River. You're going to do all these things. And you're going to meet the high people and the low people. How would you do it?" And it would be enormous. Can you imagine the information, because you have had experience of living, and now you're just going to go through it?

Well, you can't do that. But you young people should understand that that is an experience that you need, and how do you get it? You listen to the older folks. They have been your age, but you have not been theirs. It's not only the information that they have, but the living experience is what the big thing is. The more experience you have in life, especially in walking with God, the more capable you are in how you deal with people; who you take to your bosom as a real friend; and, who you are on guard against. You just have great understanding and great discernment. And this is what knowledge will give you – the "epignosis" knowledge. Take it from those who are older, and develop it on your own.

No, I think we're right here in our ministry with our young people, such that we push them toward the Word of God. Now, what they do with it is their own free will but, in God's name, they at least should have the opportunity to have a basis for making the right decision. The sadness of making a wrong decision, when nobody informed you, is very great. But at least there's some comfort in realizing that it wasn't necessary. It was a deliberate negative attitude toward a principle of doctrine so that there was no "epignosis" to control. This is a powerful, controlling thing. And I hope I'm beating away at this, such that, over these weeks, you have a deep respect for doctrine, and for what happens when you know it and you say "Amen" to it. It will control your life. It will give you physical capacity. It will kick you in high gear, in good health, and in good mental capacity. It will stay you through high points and low points far beyond your age capacity. That's what doctrine will do for you, let alone the blessings and the joy that it will bring into your life, and the injury that it will protect you from. This, from the human spirit, cycles up to the mind, and guides the decisions that your mind has to make, as to how you feel, and how you will act.

Now suppose that you don't have the information, or suppose that you are out of temporal fellowship. There's no information that's going to come up to you when you're out of fellowship. When you are resisting God, and when you're kicking your friends who are telling you the truth in their teeth, then you're out of step with God. Nothing is going to come up from that human spirit. It's going to be silent. So, what comes up? Oh, something is always going to come up. In comes the sin nature. It takes over, and it brings up to your mind the doctrines of Satan. It brings up to your mind the frame of reference of the world system. It brings up to your mind all that's wrong and evil in the capacity of mankind, and it tells your mind: "This is how you should act."

Your conscience is part of your frame of reference up there and here. And suddenly, your conscience is seared. Your conscience is calloused against the Word of God. So, all of a sudden, what the sin nature says is acceptable to you. In Romans 6:12, the apostle Paul says, "Therefore, do not let sin." Notice that this is singular here. What is that? The sin nature – not acts of sin. "Therefore, do not let the sin nature reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts." There's a terrible system of lusts in the sin nature. It's kicking it up all the time. And if you are going to stay out of fellowship, or ignorant of doctrine, so that you do not have "epignosis" to guide you, then you will act upon the information (the frame of reference of the sin nature), and of the conscience standard that sets for you. So, you will follow the jagged lines in spiritual things. You'll go religious – the jagged lines in temporal things. And you'll be breaking the moral code of God left and right. And what do you have? You have grief. You have sorrow. You have great distress. And your children are the beneficiaries of your evil.

This "epignosis" in the directive mind function forms a frame of reference, and it guides the spiritual Christian in his emotions and in his will, in matters spiritual and temporal. That means that God is in charge of the believer. The Christian then is able to deal with man and with God on the basis of God's wisdom and understanding. Now, you can't tell me that that isn't the best way to live – to be able to deal with the situations in life, and with the people that you must deal with, with wisdom. Do you remember what wisdom means? It means how to apply doctrine and understanding (discernment). You really see things the way God sees them. Nothing could be greater than that. And it all starts with sitting here in church; paying attention; learning a doctrinal principle; saying "Amen;" throw in a "Hallelujah" with it; and, kick it down to that human spirit, and what you learn now becomes powerful "epignosis" because now it grabs you. At the first, you're in control of the information. But then the information starts controlling you.

Don't be telling your kids what they should do or not to do in their lives, and . . . never teach them how they must understand that to be the principles of Almighty God, that they must say “Yes" to, and then that knowledge will grab them. Then it will control their lives. Then it will govern them. Then they will see themselves as they are. And they will, more importantly, see all those people their age around them in our whole society for the vulgar; the cheap; the pigs; and, the dogs that they are. And they will see themselves in contrast as the royal princes and princesses of the living God as members of the royal family. Then they have a capacity to have a frame of reference that is God's frame of reference, and a conscience which will guide them aright.

This word "epignosis" is used in a New Testament only of moral and religious knowledge. That's why we apply it to doctrine. It refers to what the Bible calls "the deep things of the Spirit of God." This word for full knowledge is used 20 times in the New Testament. And every time, it's an eye-opener of significance. Join us today for 20 times of "epignosis" in the Word of God.

Our Father, we thank You for this Your Word, and we ask You to bless us as we take it to heart and put it into action. It's very simple. We learn the Word. We say, "Amen." And we look to You to guide us in its application. And when we find that we're not doing it right, we are willing to correct it, as You will always show us how to correct and what needs correction. Help us to walk in integrity before You. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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