***Full Knowledge, No. 3

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-083***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," number 17, in Colossians 1:9-14.

Many of you have been thrilled by the realization that God's mind can reside in your human spirit in order to run your life. Last Sunday night was perhaps the most crucial of all this series, because we put the icing on the cake, as we walked you through the 20 times in the New Testament that the significant crucial word "epignosis" (ep-ig'-no-sis) in the Greek (full knowledge) is used in the New Testament, and what a revelation it was of the significance of that verse. Shaken all down, the bottom line is that it is possible for the mind of God, through "epignosis" doctrinal understanding to reside within our human spirits so that God runs our life. It's very hard to get that concept, and to understand that concept. If there's anything you want to be sure your children understand, that's it – that until the mind of God controls their mind, because the mind of God is in their human spirits, you have no hope for them to effectively use their lives in an evil age such as that in which we live today.

In 1 Corinthians 2:16, the apostle Paul says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that He should instruct him. But we have the mind of Christ." Who among men has the mind of God to instruct us? Nobody – not even the Pope. Nobody. But Paul says, We Christians have the mind of God. How do we have the mind of God? We have the mind of God as he's been explaining here in Colossians. We have it because we have knowledge of doctrine that we have said "Amen' to. Now it has become part of our human spirits so that therein lies the mind of God within our very being to control us. We have the mind of Christ. That's what Christianity is all about. That's what the local church ministry is all about. And if you and I do anything in the ministry of Berean Memorial church that does not contribute to securing the mind of God, for young people and for adults, we're out of the will of God. Yes, and any other church that does that is out of the will of God.

There is no way to have the mind of God to run your life except through the Word of God – through the intensive intake of the doctrines of Scripture. This is a marvelous thing, and the notes you've been writing me, and the comments you've been making, and the encouragements you've been handing along to me have made it clear to me that the light has begun to break. And you need to get hold of the fact that I am a walking human being, in whose human spirit resides the very mind of God so that I am on automatic, and all I have to do is keep saying "Yes Lord. Yes Lord" to what is His will; and, "No Lord. No Lord" to what is not His will. In other words, staying in temporal fellowship. When I'm there, and I have accumulated a reservoir of doctrine, I will do the right thing. Not only will I do the right thing, but I will also do the wise thing. I won't do something now that is foolish, because it has, in the long run, bad consequences.

You'll be getting another letter from me this week suggesting another challenge to American practice. One that your kids are going to need to know very much. And I give it to you for your understanding, and for your education. You can blow it; you can get mad at it' and, you can tear it up. Some of you will. But I would suggest you consider that you're going to be introduced to a great point of wisdom. But it's going to be swimming upstream. It's going to be exactly the opposite of what some of you think, and what some of you have been doing, and what you've been allowing your children to do. Look for the mail every day.

**The Grace System of Perception**

Our recent studies here in the book of Colossians have explained the divine system that makes it possible for us to have the mind of God residing within our human spirits. We've called that the grace system of perception. This provides a believer with the seven qualities which characterize the humanity of Jesus Christ, so that He was not a dysfunctional person. These seven things we have looked at out of Isaiah 11:2. Jesus Christ permanently indwells every Christian as the pattern for the Christian's life. In other words, Jesus is our frame of reference – the way a believer ought to be for fellowship with the Lord, and to be able to serve Him. He's right there within us – Christ residing within us. For what? For fellowship. That means that we have to be oriented to be related to Him, so that we can have fellowship with Him.

Here in our book of Colossians, very shortly, we will come to verse 27, which says, "To whom God will to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." The reason you're going to heaven (to glory land) is because Christ is in you. He indwelt you at the point of your salvation. He has permanently taken up His residence within you. Just before He left the disciples, and went to the cross, and all the terrible events that were soon to follow, in John 14:20, the Lord made this dramatic statement: "In that day (the day when all of this would become clear to them of what was happening so rapidly around them, leading to His crucifixion and resurrection), you shall know that I am in My Father; and you in Me; and, I in you." What thrilling words, "You will be in Me." Because I am in Christ (I'm born again), I have all the benefits and all the honors, and all the things that pertain to the Son of God are mine, including being just like Him, the Bible says, in all of His perfection someday. And, furthermore: "He is in me."

Now, we all know very well that the Holy Spirit indwells us, but we seem to forget sometimes that Christ indwells us. He is there. He is permanently there. And the reason for that is because he is the pattern by which we are to govern our lives. He is our frame of reference. What would Christ do? Yes, I love that definition of one of the speakers at the Republican convention. Character is doing right when no one is watching. And the person that will really do that is the person who has Jesus Christ there as the frame of reference, as the example of what is right, to which He will accommodate Himself and pattern Himself.

However, along with the indwelling of Christ, God has given something more. And that is the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in order to shape our lives into the pattern of the indwelling Christ. That is why the Holy Spirit is there – to keep molding our lives into the pattern of the indwelling Christ.

This is what we do in all of our ministries. This is what we do with our young people. Why do you think we knock ourselves out to have a Christian day school, having to fight uphill all the way, because nobody wants to give us the money to do it? It is because we need to enable these kids to be molded into the image of Christ – the Christ who indwells them as Christians, so that they will know how to be related to Him through the Holy Spirit, so that they can grow up to be something more than dogs and pigs. And if they're in a secular school, from the moment they walk in the door until they walk out, they're being acclimated away from Christ. In a Christian school, from the moment they walk in, and we kick off with that doctrinal Bible study in the morning, they're being drawn into the pattern of the image of Christ who is in them.

Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God Who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." The Holy Spirit takes the word of doctrine, and He molds your life to the pattern of the indwelling Christ. He's the sample: "I have been crucified with Christ." When He died, I died. So, it is no longer I who live. It's no longer my life. I'm living my life through Him. He is living my life. His life is my life. And I'm doing that by faith in Him, and in His commandments, which are the Word of God.

Ephesians 3:16: "That He would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through His spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge ("gnosis"), that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."

What on earth is he apostle Paul talking about? He's talking about the fact that Christ indwells us, and the Holy Spirit, when He's allowed to do it, and is given the materials of doctrine to work with, will mold you into the pattern of the Christ who indwells you – into the fullness of God Himself, such that you will have a capacity to think right because you have the mind of God: "Grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through his Holy Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and, to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to the fullness of God." The breadth, the length, the height, and the depth – that's pretty inclusive. That covers it all.

What is he saying? He says, "You'll be a total human being, and you'll be the kind of person you ought to be. You'll be like Jesus. Now that's the thing that we've been talking about. And that's why your soul should thrill when you realize that, within your human spirit, it is possible for you to build the mind of God. And in your children – to put them under the influences and associations that will constantly be pushing them toward building the mind of God in their human spirits.

**Full Knowledge**

This transformation, as we have shown you, is by means of the "epignosis" knowledge which is stored in a believer's human spirit. The word "epignosis," as we've told you, refers to doctrine which is learned from the teaching ministry of the pastor-teacher. And when it is believed, it is stored in the human spirit for future guidance. "Epignosis" knowledge has the quality of taking control of the believer's mind. It grabs him as he goes positive to doctrine. It is much different than just plain "gnosis" knowledge. It is a dramatically different word. And last Sunday night, 20 times, we showed you the impact of that dramatic difference. "Epignosis" is a doctrinal concept that takes control.

Now, if you've got a full human spirit reservoir of God's thinking, where do you think you're going to go in life? What kind of a life do you think you're going to look back on? And take no mistake about it, when you get up to the Judgment Seat of Christ (JSC), one of the things you're going to be doing is standing there, waiting for your turn to come up to the throne, and you're going to be looking down the corridors of time, and you're going to look at what was, and you're going to look at what might have been had you had the mind of God running things instead of the mind of man; the mind of your peers; and, the mind of your cutesy-pooh, sweet Christian friends who are totally out of any contact with the Word of God, because they're in entertainment theology, not in instructional theology. And you don't want to be ugly; judgmental; or, something like that, and call it for what it is.

Well, I guarantee you that you'll know it then. And then again that thought will cross your mind: "Boy, with what I know now, I wish I could go back and start my life all over again from the first moment I'm conscious, and I'd step into a situation, and I'd know that this is the way I played it last time, but here's how I'm going to play it this time. This is the move I made that time, but I'm not going to make that this time. I'm going to make this move, because how I know this is a better way to do it.

Well, you don't have to wait for that. The mind of God, Who is an omnipotent mind, already knows the right answers. If you get the mind of Christ in your human spirit, that will automatically control what you do as long as you keep saying, "Yes Lord; yes Lord; yes" to His leading. You do not grieve. You do not quench. And you walk by means of the Holy Spirit. There you have it – how to be filled with the Spirit, and how to be controlled by the Spirit. Those are the things that the Bible puts together: "Do not quench Him (don't say "no"). Do not grieve Him (don't tolerate sin). Walk by means of the Holy Spirit, which means walking by means of doctrinal principles, and not by human viewpoint.

So, "epignosis" is a particular kind of knowledge that grabs hold of you. It penetrates the mentality of the soul, and it then will direct your will and your emotions. That's what's behind that well-known verse, Romans 12:2, where the apostle Paul says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Get your mind on "epignosis" frame of reference – the renewing of your mind. Renew it from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint: "That you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

The use of the word "epignosis" 20 times in the New Testament demonstrates the power of such full knowledge in a believer's life. And it is no wonder that we were awed, and there was almost a hush in this room. And I see things from my vantage point that you don't, because people were glued last Sunday night, and some of them were literally leaning forward in their chairs as it was beginning to hit them – the great potential of having the mind of God running their lives.

Storing "epignosis" knowledge of doctrine in one's human spirit is the first duty of the Christian life. You are not called first to serve God. You are first called to become something. You are never called to Christian service until you have become something that is capable of doing it. You are not going to go to somebody for some professional service if they don't know something first. How do you think it makes the passenger on Robert Nicholas's plane feel when he comes out of his cabin to stroll through with the passengers (for public relations), and he's carrying a little book in his hand on How to Fly an Airplane? Or he has another sign: How to Get from Here to There? You know what they're going to look at as he goes by, and what their eyes are going to be glued to.

Well, why in the Christian life is it different? We want a professional who has been trained, and who knows his stuff, before we place ourselves into his hands. And the first thing, if human beings are going to place their minds and their lives into your hands for guidance and spiritual things, is for you to know something. And all you have to do is turn on the television on Sunday morning, and you'll see the baloney that's coming out of these great programs left and right. There is some good stuff (a few chunks of bread), but mostly baloney, and a lot of inspiration, and a lot of kicky stuff. And when you're through, you have nothing. You made have hooped and hollered with the crowd, but after you're through, when the devil comes and stares you in the face, you have nothing. And when the crises come to meet you, you're not able to cope with it. And when you stand looking over that slippery slope that leads to eternity once you're on it, you're not going to have any preparation to go out with joy. All of this is because of our not taking seriously, and not being prepared, as the first duty of the Christian life. As God's priest you have to know your job. And the only way you'd get to know that job is through the storing of doctrine and that human spirit.

Therefore, this is the reason for Hebrews 10:25, which is a commandment of God: "Not forsaking our own assembling together." That means showing up in church when the services are run. And if you're not here, it's a sin. Okay, get your piece of paper out. List all the names of the people that you know should be here this morning, unless by a providential act of God they've been prevented. They're in a sin condition, because they've broken this rule: "Do not forsake your own assembling together as is the habit of some." Some people do it all the time: "But encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Yeah, it's not a bad idea to call Susie Jones the next day and say, "I'm sorry. I didn't see you in church yesterday. Or John Blow: "Sorry, I didn't see you in church yesterday." Or that young person: "Where on earth were you? That service was designed just for you." Is it possible that the devil jerked you right then when he knew you should be there, because this is what you needed? Well, most of the time, people who aren't in the service are the very ones that God is trying to speak to. If you're not here, you're not going to be instructed. And you have to be very careful about justifying the fact that your circumstances in life are preventing you from being here. Change the circumstances. Adjust the circumstances. And just don't say "No."

Where a local church is doing its proper job of enabling people to function under the grace system of perception to gain "epignosis" knowledge, it is worth your time to be there. It has disastrous consequences if you are not.

**Fill your Deficiency**

Now, the basis for functioning as a normal believer, instead of a dysfunctional believer, in the Christian life has been pointed out to us in two keywords in Colossians 1:9: "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it (your love), and thus your being filled with the Holy Spirit, We have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask." Because God has told us to ask, we have the right to ask: "That you may be (number one keyword:) 'filled.'" That tells us that there is some kind of a deficiency in the human soul. There is something missing in the human soul. There is something that's missing in every human being at the point of salvation. And that is the mind of God. We call that divine viewpoint.

**Avoid Reversionism**

So, first of all, this which is missing must be filled, and it must be filled with the second keyword, "the knowledge;" the full knowledge, that is (the "epignosis" knowledge – the Word of God received with positive volition put in the human spirit). Divine viewpoint truth has to fill that void. It's filled with human viewpoint. That has to be flushed out by divine viewpoint. Christians who lack this full knowledge "epignosis" are dysfunctional in life in various ways. No matter how much and how long you've walked with the Lord, and how long you've known Him, do not ever presume that you cannot fall under this terrible reversion of being a dysfunctional Christian. And that's not only serious for you, but it's serious for the rest of us, because dysfunctional Christians are a burden upon the functional believers in God's work. And if they become too great a burden, they'll be removed from the presence of that local church ministry. God protects His functioning church. He zealously protects it. He zealously defends it. And if some influence begins to contaminate and undermine, He'll jerk the influence. And that person, without knowing it, perhaps, is under divine discipline.

**God's Will**

The goal of the functional believer is then explained in the latter part of Colossians 1:9: "That you may be filled with the knowledge of His will." The Greek word is "thelema" (thel'-ay-mah), T H E L E M A. This is the regular biblical word that refers to the divine purpose, or the mission of God, for a believer. When the Bible uses this word, it is talking about what God intends you to do with your life. When the Bible uses this word, it is talking about why you were ever conceived. This is why you came into existence. You came to fulfill a particular niche of service that God has prepared for you.

**Use your Spiritual Gifts**

Now, every Christian is born to serve God in a particular way in the kingdom of God during the church age. That is what we use our spiritual gifts for. And that is why, when we talk about the will of God, you must associate it with your spiritual gifts. If you ever get knocked out of using your spiritual gifts, you're out of the will of God. And you better fight your way, one way or another, back to whatever it takes to get back to where you're using your spiritual gift (or gifts). Every Christian is born with a capacity for divine good production. The sovereign design of God for every child in His royal family is what we're talking about. And you should never get tired of the fact that the pastor-teacher (PT) is trying to call you back to focus on the will of God – the "thelema" of God. That's what life is all about for you. Anything outside of that is what the Bible talks about when it says, "What have you gained if you gain everything else in the world, but you lose your life." And anytime you're out of the will of God, you've lost your life.

So, the pastor-teacher is very much under the duty of alerting you to that, because it is so easy to get grabbed into the world. It is so easy to be doing things that the dead should be doing. The spiritually dead should be bearing those things. You should be exhausting yourself with your spiritual gift. And the dead, out there in the world, will do very nicely without you, and do the job just as well. But they can't do what you have been called to do, and are equipped to do in the service of the kingdom of God.

So, there's a place in the royal family of God for every child. The knowledge of one's divine mission, and its stages of fulfillment over a lifetime, come from "epignosis" in the human spirit. You will not know exactly what God wants you to do entirely, at a certain point in point. You will know: "I should do this now; I should take this next step; and, I should do this." But you're always moving toward what you do with your focus upon your spiritual gift and your mission.

You don't have to wait till you grow up to use your spiritual gift. If you're a young person, and you're born again, you've got a gift – maybe more than one. And if you are focusing upon that, and you're into the Word of God, you will begin to discover that you have a knack for doing something. You have a hand, or you have a touch, within the circle of your young associates. And pretty soon there will come a perception on the part of the adults who work with you, as well as yourself, and certainly with your peers, that you have a knack for doing something. And they will begin to look to you for you to perform with that capacity. That's called "your mission." That's called "your ability from God." And when "epignosis" is in your human spirit, you have God's mind directing you toward that preparation. The knowledge of your divine mission comes from what is in the human spirit.

So, if one is not well versed in doctrine, he cannot really know the will of God for him. And then the Christian falls back on human reason. He tries justifying. He thinks his way through. And human reason is depraved. It was completely disoriented when Adam sinned.

Now, you Catholics still believe, under the teaching of your church, that the human mind is only flawed, but not depraved. Consequently, the result has been, in Catholicism, one of the most outrageous, horrible, false, doctrinal system ever conceived, all in the name of Christ. Where did it come from? It's not in the Bible. Nobody claims it's in the Bible. They said it comes from the teaching authority of the church, by which they mean the mind of the pope and the magisterium, the College of Cardinals. They speak for God. How can they speak for God? From their thinking. But their thinking is depraved. It's not just flawed, but it's depraved.

The apostle Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 1:21, "For man, by wisdom, knew not God." That's very simple. To the people of Corinth, in the first book of Corinthians, he said, "By wisdom (human viewpoint – man's rational capacity), none of you have learned anything about God, and that's why you have got such a mess in the Corinthian church – because you're so shot down with carnality, because you're all thinking your way to what is right with God. And you're wrong.

So, this is not uncommon that we are surrounded by substitutes for that which bring us the real knowledge ("epignosis") of the will of God – the fullness of the will of God. We're substituting it with other things. And when I alert you to it, most of you are my friends. And you act as my friends, and you understand that you can have your own thoughts and your own opinions. But some people become very unfriendly. And if I touch something that they think they just love so much, they just go bananas. And you would be astounded, and probably you'd have some strong words to say to them.

You're going to get something else in the mail from me. It is a little booklet written by one of our associate pastors in the metroplex area on some major biggie movements that have sacred-cow men involved in it. He got a firestorm when he wrote the book. I read it again yesterday. He's right on target. We're going to get one for each of you. You get it in the mail. It'll take you a little time to sit down and read. If you have any trouble. We have some old Dick and Jane reading books to help you get brushed up on reading. Some of you aren't good on reading, but I would suggest that you dig into this one. And suddenly, you're going to hear names that everybody gets sweaty under the armpits when they hear. They just begin to ooze. And you know what? I enjoyed reading the book because it reinforced one of the things I know that I have – a gift from God for discernment. I can spot the stinko and the conman. I can look right through all the sophistication, and all the pomp and circumstance, and all the notoriety. And when I can't even put my finger on why, the mind of Christ rises up and says, "This is something that you should back off from, and be on guard."

This man has done the research. He has gone into the depths. And what I have suspected has been more than confirmed about these organizations, and about what men of God (and we're not calling them anything else) have now decided, such as the fact that Catholics do not need to be evangelized. And they have signed a document: "We will not try to evangelize Catholics. They are to be treated as brothers in Christ." And yet, the Catholic Church has never renounced the Council of Trent decision. They spent 12 years trying to get rid of everything that Martin Luther taught, and one of the things they said was: "If anybody says that they can believe in Christ, and instantly be justified, he is to be anathema:" "If anybody believes that you can believe in Christ and be instantly justified, let him be anathema." Do you know what "anathema" means? He will go to hell. The Roman Catholic Church says that you are under the edict of anathema. You are on your way to the lake of fire. There is no way out. You're going to be there.

Now, is that what the gospel teaches? Is it okay for us to say that any Catholic who believes that is wrong? What the rest of the Council of Trent decided was that justification is a progression. You gradually get righteous enough to go to heaven. You gradually earn enough favor and merit with God so that you can die in the status of grace, or at least get enough grace in purgatory for you to get to heaven. You cannot be instantly justified.

However, the poor apostle Paul – that poor stumblebum. A poor guy in Philippi, a jailer, gets scared of where his destiny's taking him, and says, "What must I do to be saved?" All that Paul says is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. And if your family believes that, they're going to be saved too. Your whole house will go."

Now, somebody has to be wrong here. You'll enjoy reading this book, and then you will sit and shake your head, and say, "How can this happen?" This can happen when the focus of even the best of Bible teachers is not an "epignosis" knowledge in the human spirit. We are in the know. We have learned this doctrine. And you have no reason to ever be deceived by what churches do if they deviate from this focus. It is the Word, and the Word, and the Word.

It is "epignosis" in the human spirit that gives you one important thing that all of us need. And that is a frame of reference to determine one's divine calling in life, and to determine the steps that we take. You have to have a frame of reference. Now, I started this morning by telling you that Jesus Christ indwells you. He's your frame of reference. He is your model. He is the pattern. And the Holy Spirit also indwells us. And the doctrine that you have learned and turned into "epignosis" secure knowledge in your human spirit, the Holy Spirit keeps bringing up, as the mind of God, to apply to the situations of life. Christ is the frame of reference by which the Spirit of God works.

**The Frame of Reference**

So, here's several things you should remember about the frame of reference. This is why it's important to develop that frame of reference. And why I say that this is the first thing of the Christian life, when you're born-again – not serving God, but building a frame of reference – a reference of "epignosis" knowledge (full knowledge).

1. **Comprehend Advanced Doctrinal Principles**

It is the frame of reference of doctrine that enables a believer to comprehend advanced doctrinal principles, and thus to attain a clear understanding of God's will. Most Christians are pathetically elementary in their knowledge of the Word of God. They are sadly elementary in their knowledge of the Word of God. They don't know the great doctrines. They don't know even some theological terms that they ought to know for referring to the great doctrines.

In Hebrews 5:11-14, the writer says, "Concerning Him (Christ), we have much to say. And it's hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing." Now what has happened? These Christians, who were of Jewish background, were going back to the Mosaic lifestyle. Consequently, their ears are dull on spiritual understanding. Their human spirit frame of reference has been distorted. Had they had a true frame of reference, relative to the doctrine of Christ, they wouldn't have made this mistake. Now they can't understand the foolishness of going back to Moses to get to heaven: "For though, by this time, you ought to be teachers." You've been hanging around church long enough, you ought to know something to be able to tell somebody else, and do it right: "You have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God. And you have come to need milk and not solid food."

Boy, when somebody walks in, and maybe comes from another church where all they have gotten is milk, their eyes glaze over by the time I get halfway through. And they're just so lost. They don't know what's going on. They're blown out of the water, because, suddenly, they're listening to deep things of the Word of God, because here we serve the meat of the Word, and they can't digest it. And when you don't digest, you just die.

That was one of those one-liner quips that the professional preachers use. If you don't digest, you just die. Wasn't that clever? That will carry you through the week. Hang on to that: "I have to give you milk again, not solid food. For everyone who overtakes only of milk, is not accustomed to the Word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice, have their senses trained to discern good and evil." And what the writer is saying is that the more doctrine you have built as a frame of reference, the deeper things of God will come to you more easily. You will understand principles, just like this one we're talking about – the whole concept of the mind of God through "epignosis" knowledge in your human spirit. That's not a simple little Sunday school doctrine of elementary kind. It's a deep thing – one of the great deep doctrine of the Word of God. And some people cannot grasp it. Why? Because they don't have a frame of reference. They don't have any doctrinal frame of reference to build upon.

1. **Integrity**

Secondly, a frame of reference guides the conscience to true values and standards in carrying out the will of God. We call this integrity. It is the doctrines of Scripture, that frame of reference, that gives you what is real values and real standards by which to live your life.

1. **Prayer Life**

Then a frame of reference guides one prayer life in finding and carrying out the will of God. You see, prayer is crucial. When you have a frame of reference of doctrine in your human spirit, you know how to pray. You know that you should pray. You have a great respect for prayer.

John 14:13-14: "And whatever you ask in My Name," Jesus says, "this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." Now, you see the qualification in those verses. You can ask God for anything, and He will say "Yes," provided that the qualification is met: "In My Name." And "In My Name" means that which is according to the will of God. The name of Christ stands for everything that He is. The name of Christ stands for everything that God is. He's not going to give you something that is not in compatibility with the name of God – what God stands for. And a name in Scripture is what a person stands for. They used to name children by characteristics they thought the youngster had. Here is the principle of having a frame of reference in my human spirit so that I know how to pray. And I don't ask God for things that are incompatible with the Word of God.

This principle of prayer and guidance of doctrine is stressed in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need." And I'm always humble when I walk in on Wednesday night, and there's all those people sitting there waiting to pray.

1. **Witnessing**

Then there's a point that the frame of reference provides a basis for witnessing to the unsaved. If you don't have the frame of reference of grace doctrine, in terms of salvation, you'll give a false gospel. You'll be talking about lordship salvation. Some people don't attend our church anymore because I told them that Lordship salvation is wrong. You do not find that a person is saved by the way he behaves. A carnal Christian can be saved, the Bible says – in fact, very much saved. In fact, it says that he'll get the heaven through the judgment of God. He's saved. He's in Christ. But he is barely skinning himself in there by the skin of his teeth. But he is out of fellowship with God, and he pays a terrible price for that. But he goes to heaven. So, if you don't have a frame of reference of what the doctrine is, you're not going to be much good at witnessing.

1. **Protection from False Doctrine**

Then the frame of reference protects us from false doctrine, which misdirects one's life away from the will of God. This can also often be something very, very subtle – getting yourself trapped into some favorite preacher that you have, who comes up with an idea that seems to answer some problem that you have. Usually, false doctrine has the attraction of solving a problem that a person has, because they don't understand enough doctrine to know what the true answer is. So, some guy comes along, that carries some authority, and he kicks in some other reason for your problem that is not biblical. But you think that that's the answer. But what has happened is what Luke 13:20-21 describe, where Jesus said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God (heaven)? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened." The kingdom of God here, with its earthly aspect, can have false doctrine kicked in, and it'll permeate the whole group (the whole society).

Where do you think liberalism came from theologically? It came from good churches. It came from churches where they had a preacher who came in, and he kicked in a little false doctrine (just a little leaven). And pretty soon, the whole congregation was deceived. The whole lump was contaminated, and the whole church went down the tube into liberalism.

1. **Mental Attitude Love**

Then, the frame of reference enables God's servant to serve with mental attitude love; to share God's happiness under trial; and, maintain a functioning priesthood before God. He doesn't cut out of his service. How we should honor these men and women who serve in various capacities here at Berean Church, including these people who work in the Berean Youth Clubs, which is a once-a-week thing, on a deadline, that you have to meet, and that you have to be prepared for, and you have to be there, and you have to kick in right after you get back from work. And yet these people come out. And because they have an "epignosis" frame of reference in their souls, they have a mental attitude love for these kids we minister to. They share God's happiness even when it's a pressure for them to come out and serve. And they maintain their priesthood before God (their temporal fellowship), so that they're able to minister effectively to people.

These people are to be honored. And nowhere is that more evidenced, and nowhere is that impact greater on me, than in summer camp, when we finish lunch, and we let the kids go through the snack-shack line to get a snack of something. And then they go outside of the dining room to wait, and to eat their snacks, and to entertain themselves for a bit while the staff gets together. And I look at that huge body of men and women and young people who are there, doing what? They're doing Galatians 6:9: "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time, we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

It's always sad when people cut out of Christian service because it's inconvenient for them. And it tells us a lot about that person: "I can't put myself out for a group of young people. I can't put myself out for a Sunday school class. I can't put my life on the line to regularly perform in God's service where I have the ability; the gift; and, the knack to do it.

1. **Guide Dear Friends**

Then what the frame of reference will do is that it will guide the believer. And this is very important. It will guide the believer to people with eyes on the Lord who are living for His glory, to be their dearest friends. It will reinforce their devotion and their mission. Friends – that's a popular subject. It's always a good subject. Preachers love to talk about friends in one way or another. And a Christian who has a proper frame of reference will not take to viper to his bosom a viper. He will not take to his bosom someone who's a dog; or who's a pig; or, who is out of line with the Word of God. And when you have a frame of reference (you have God's mind), you will recoil. You'll just recoil from that person. You'll recoil from the action. You'll recoil from the suggestion. You will not want to have anything to do with it.

If you have a frame of reference, you'll be able to sing the old song. Remember it? "Friendship. Friendship. What a perfect friendship. When other friendships are all forgot, ours will still be hot." You can sing that, and it'll be true. When other friendships are all forgotten, ours will still be hot. Why? Because it's built upon "epignosis" frame of reference knowledge. And you're not going to take some smelly skunk to your bosom. You're going to have, as your real friends, those who have a compatible frame of reference.

I have people all over this congregation who are my intense friends – almost all of them. And I don't have to do cutesy-pooh things with them. But in various ways, they let me know that they have me as a friend, and that's how they view me. And our friendship is based upon the compatibility of our frame of reference in Christ. It is our "epignosis" frame of reference that draws us to one another; that makes us buddies; that makes us dependent on one another; and, that makes us glad to receive each other into the closest of associations of friends. Don't talk about the stupid little lists that preachers give you about people who are your friends if they do this, and if they do this, and so on and so forth. And don't be saying that some is your friend because you can go and dump on him. You don't even need to be worrying about having friends, really. Somebody recently said, "I don't want to come to Berean Church anymore, because I just don't have any friends there." And as we were listening to someone reporting this, some of our men said, "Well, maybe it's because their friendship is not based upon the doctrines of the Word of God to which we are oriented.

Now, what in the world made Jesus Christ the friend of His disciples? What makes Him your friend? In John 15:14-15, Jesus said, "You are My friends if you do what I command you." What He commands us is doctrine – "epignosis" in the human spirit: "You're my friends if you live by the frame of reference of "epignosis. No longer do I call you slaves for the slave does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard (doctrine) from My Father, I have made known to you." I don't need to have human friends. I have plenty of them. Most of the people of this congregation are my very intimate close friends, and they treat me like that. And I'm humbled by it. I'm honored by it. But the friend that I need is Jesus Christ.

So, if you're going to preach to people about having a friend, and somebody that's your friend, that's the friend you need. And if you walk in here, and nobody is nice to you, and nobody is friendly, and nobody speaks to you, but you get doctrine to build a frame of reference in your human spirit, you'll have Christ as your friend. Do you realize that? You'll have the mind of Christ. Now, that's real friendship. That's friendship that counts. When some preacher gives you a powerful sermon with all of his little cutesy-pooh lists of things that identify good friends, that's going to go away. But you will never forget what you heard this morning – that those who are related with a frame of reference of "epignosis" stored in their human spirits – those can be your friends. They will never desert you. They will never be traitors. They will treat you with the respect that you deserve, as a man, or a woman, or a young person. You can take them to your bosom, and you will never regret it.

1. **Protection of Freedom**

One thing more than a frame of reference will do is that it'll guide you as a Christian and your proper role of government in protecting personal and economic freedom. The reason our nation is going down the tube is because we have Americans who do not have the frame of reference of "epignosis," so that they know what government should do, and should not do. So, government taking over the lives of people, and they don't realize that we were a nation blessed by God, with a system of government that prevented that to happen.

Recently in a social group, I said to the people sitting there, "Government is always the enemy of the people." And a cloud came over the face of one person, and he said, "The government is always the enemy of the people?" I said, "Yes, government is always the enemy of the people because government consists of people with sin natures, and the sin nature is always a threat unless it is restraint." And then I said, "That's why President George Washington said that: "Government, like fire, is a useful servant, but a terrible master." And Thomas Jefferson said: "Government must always be chained down from its potential tyranny. It must always be restrained from its potential tyranny by the chains of the Constitution." What has been broken in our country is that Christians do not have a frame of reference upon which freedom depends, as the Bible tells us, that the institution of divine government is for maintaining law and order in a society, so that everybody has an equal opportunity to exercise their unequal abilities. A Christian with a frame of reference of "epignosis" is all that will ever save this nation. How much of that we have, we are about to see in the next election.

Dear God, we thank you for the Word, the Word, and the Word. And we pray Your blessing, in an enormous way, upon these people – these who are our friends, but most importantly, they are Your friends.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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