

# How Can We Grow In The Knowledge Of God and Christ?

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Recorded June 17, 2017

Let's turn over to a prophecy that applies today in Hosea. It applies today and obviously it applied to Ancient Israel when it was written.

**Hosea 4:1.** *Hear the word of the LORD [the Eternal], ye children of Israel: [why?] for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, ... (KJV)*

Now let's see why. What is the controversy?

**1b)** *... because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. (KJV)*

We're told here that in Ancient Israel, there was no true knowledge of God in the land. It specifically applies to Ancient Israel but it's valid for today because we are spiritual Israel. And we, many of us, are the descendants of those Israelites.

I read a recent survey about religious activity in the United States and it said now, in the U.S., only 37% of Americans attend church regularly. One hundred years ago, it was over 90%, but only 37% attend church regularly and only 40% of the people in the U.S. pray once a week. Once a week! And probably that's because some emergency happened and they want God to bail them out, so once a week or so they may utter a prayer. But that's how far away we've come from the knowledge of God.

As this knowledge decreases all around us, all throughout the world, what does God want us to be doing as the days get closer to the end? We find that in the same book in chapter 6, verse 6. We read this often for other reasons and to address other subjects.

**Hosea 6:6.** *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; ... (KJV)*

You can sacrifice all the animals you want, but if you're not merciful, you're not pleasing God. But notice this:

**6b)** *... [I desired] the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (KJV)*

So what we're being told here is God is telling us "I want you to know about me. I want you to study about me. I want you to investigate me. I want you to have a right picture of who I am." And He wants that more than sacrifice, more than burnt offerings.

Now that theme is repeated in the New Testament by Peter. Let's go to 2 Peter 3:18. Very familiar scripture. This time it refers to Jesus Christ. So you have one scripture in

the Old Testament that refers to God and a scripture in the New Testament that refers to Jesus Christ.

**2 Peter 3:18.** *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (KJV)*

We're to grow in grace, yes, but also the knowledge of Jesus Christ, who He is . How does He relate to the Father? What is their relationship? And to know His nature and to look at the New Testament as far as when He walked the earth and the example that He set for us. The knowledge not only of Jesus Christ but of the Father.

So we have a mandate, all of us individually, from God, to grow in the knowledge of the Father and the Son. That is pleasing to God.

The title of the sermon is,

### How Can We Grow In The Knowledge Of God And Christ?

We want to investigate that today. The first point I want to make is so important.

#### **1. We need to follow the example of the Bereans.**

If we're going to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and God the Father, we have to follow the example of the Bereans. Let's go to Acts 17.

**Acts 17:1.** *Now when they [Paul and Luke, his traveling companion] had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: (KJV)*

That was Paul's pattern and habit.

2) *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,*

3) *Opening and alleging, [this is what he was preaching] that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. (KJV)*

So he reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue there. But, we won't take the time to read ensuing verses, he faced opposition for preaching the truth. They didn't accept it, they didn't like it, they didn't want it. Then in verse 10:

10) *And the brethren [in Thessalonica] immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: ... (KJV)*

Paul had to get out of town because of the opposition so they went to Berea and Berea is about 40 miles west of Thessalonica.

*10b) ...who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. (KJV)*

So he brought exactly the same message. Put yourself in the position of the Bereans. Here they are in the synagogue, Paul comes in and he starts preaching Jesus Christ and the resurrection. They had never heard that before. This was something totally new to the Bereans.

*11) These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (KJV)*

Verse 11 tells us the Bereans did three things:

First, they received Paul's words with all readiness of mind. What they were being told, as I said before, was something totally new and yet despite the fact that it was totally new, we're told they had an open mind. That they didn't just close their mind and reject it. They opened their mind, they were not afraid of searching or finding the truth, so they just listened patiently to what Paul had to say.

The Greek word for "received" here is Strong's 1209 it means *to receive either literally or figuratively, to accept*. So they accepted Paul's words. "Yes, this man is telling us something new, let's listen carefully to see what he says." The Greek word for "readiness" is Strong's 4288 and it means *eagerness or a willing mind, a willing spirit*. Just to listen patiently and drink in what Paul was saying.

So the message here is that the first thing they did was they looked into Paul's teaching with an open mind. And there's a lesson for us there that we must always be seeking the truth in God's word. So Paul was preaching this new thing to them out of God's word. We are told they didn't reject it, they listened, they looked at the scriptures.

That leads then to the second thing they did which is that they searched the scrolls to see if what they had heard was true. The Greek word for "search" is Strong's 350 and it means *to scrutinize, investigate, determine, question, examine*. So they took what Paul said and they opened the scrolls, looked at the scriptures and compared what Paul said with the scriptures. Because for the Bereans, God's word was the standard, the foundation, the bedrock. The scriptures are the foundation by which all other things are judged in a Berean's mind.

Now what the Bereans did not do, and we have to be careful about this, is study to prove a foregone conclusion. They didn't say, "Okay, this is what I want to end up with so let me twist the scriptures or maneuver the scriptures to get what I want." They didn't do that. They received what Paul said with an open mind, then they looked into the scriptures to see if what Paul was saying jived with the scriptures.

You know, Mr. Armstrong said that for years. Remember when he said, “Don’t believe me, blow the dust off your Bible and prove it for yourselves.” Just like the Bereans. Back in the 60s when I was listening to him on the radio, he would probably say that every other broadcast. And he was challenging the people to prove what he said out of the Bible.

So the Bereans searched the scrolls to see if what Paul said was true.

The third thing the Bereans did is that they searched the scriptures daily. Not once a month, not once a week, but daily. As it applies to us today, the fact is that we have so much garbage coming in from the world, social media, the internet, e-mails, television, movies, all of this Satanic world being blasted at us, thrown at us, every single day. And if we don’t counter that influence, we’re going to be like the world. We’ll have the same language the world does, we’ll have the same attitude, the same thoughts and the same values if we don’t counter that. Therefore, study is necessary daily to get our mind on what God says and to counter all this other garbage that’s being thrown at us from the world.

Daily study keeps our mind on what God says and who God is and who Christ is. Notice what daily study leads to. James 1:27. Very familiar scripture but think of it in relation to putting Godly information into our minds.

***James 1:27.*** *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. (KJV)*

One of the functions of studying God’s word daily is it counters the garbage from the world. Our son was visiting a fellow from Africa who had come over to the United States. He had never flown on an airplane before and never had been out of his country before. Our son asked him what impressed him most of all that he’d seen. The man said, “Every one of your streets is paved.” Then he mentioned the grass. He’d never seen grass like we have. But the fact is that a hundred years ago the streets were not paved and what would happen is that a gentleman who was walking a woman down a boardwalk or sidewalk would put himself between her and the street because sometimes the streets were sewers. That was where people dumped their slop bucket the next morning and a wagon would come by and splatter stuff all over and the gentleman would shield the woman from that. Then she wouldn’t become spotted by what the wagons were splattering.

God is telling us here that one of our jobs is to be unspotted, unsoiled from the world and daily Bible study helps us do that.

There is an error I found talking to people, that many people, too many people, don’t study the Bible directly. They don’t just open the Bible and study a subject and let the Bible define the Bible. What they do is study what somebody else says about the Bible. They might read a booklet or see something on the internet and that is their study.

They're listening to or reading what somebody else said or wrote rather than doing what the Bereans did, going into the scriptures to see what the scriptures actually say. And given the internet today, you can find the weirdest stuff about doctrine and teaching out there.

The Bereans studied the scriptures directly. They went to the scrolls because people didn't have Bibles in those days. The only way you could study the scripture is you had to trudge down to the synagogue and get permission to take a scroll out and then unroll the scroll and read it line by line. That is all they had. And you look at what we have today. We can have a printed Bible in our lap and a computer with a Bible in our lap. We can do word searches and all of this. And they had just the scrolls. So we are so, so blessed. But we need to follow their example.

Here is an admonition that applies to us today.

***Ephesians 5:14.*** *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, ... (KJV)*

*Paul is quoting Isaiah 60:1. He then says if you awake from sleep and arise as from the dead,*

*14b) ... and Christ shall give thee light.*

*15) See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

*16) Redeeming the time,...(KJV)*

The Greek means *to rescue from loss*. Rescue the time, don't lose the time, don't waste the time.

*16b) ...because the days are evil.*

*17) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. KJV)*

How do we understand what the will of the Lord is? By looking into God's word. By looking into what God says, what Christ said when He walked the earth, to see what they say so we can understand what their will is. And that's what we're talking about today. God's will is for us to come to a greater knowledge of Him and Jesus Christ. We all need to follow the example of the Bereans.

## **2. We must have a right motivation in our study.**

For Bible study to be effective, our motive has to be correct. We have to ask ourselves: What is my motivation in studying God's word?

I recently got home from Moses Lake about a month or six weeks ago, and I checked my e-mails. There's generally 15 or 20 that I have to plow through before I can go to bed. And there was this one where a guy was just ripping me apart about the sermon

that I had just given. He wrote it down and blasted me during the time I was driving home. He was pretty sarcastic, but the fact was as I looked at it, I could see where in the body which was about four pages, single spaced, the font was a little different in some paragraphs, the color was slightly different, the spacing was slightly different, the type size was slightly different. So that told me what he was doing was copying text from what somebody else said and he was making it appear that this is what he was saying.

I asked myself: What is this guy's motivation? His motivation was to show me how smart he was. It had nothing to do with the truth. He wanted to lift himself up and say, "Look what I know that you don't know. Look how smart I am. Look to me because I'm the fountain of all knowledge." If that's our motivation, Satan is right there. He is just right there.

Let's look at the motivation of the Athenians. After Paul left Berea, he went to Athens. Let's look at Acts 17, picking up the story in verse 16. Paul went to Thessalonica, then he went to Berea, and now he is in Athens.

*Acts 17:16. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. (KJV)*

The margin in the King James says *full of idols*. And it was. They worshipped so many different gods in Athens in those days.

*17) Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, ...(KJV)*

Did the same thing he did before in Thessalonica and Berea.

*17b) ... and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. (KJV)*

He was doing this publicly.

*18) Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. (KJV)*

The same message that he gave to the Thessalonians and the Bereans.

*19) And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, ... (KJV)*

Areopagus is the rock of Aries and Aries is the Greek god of war. It is a place in Athens now known as Mars Hill. So they took him there. There was apparently an amphitheater or a place where people could sit and discuss various issues.

19b) ... saying, *May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?* (KJV)

They were asking him to tell them, teach them. They wanted to know what he was saying.

20) *For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.*

21) [Here's the key] *(For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)* (KJV)

If the motivation is just to hear something new, something to titillate our intellect, that's a human motivation, but it isn't what God wants. That same attitude can creep into the church, has crept into the church in the past. Let's go to 2 Timothy 4:3. Paul is telling Timothy that this is going to happen and he wanted him to be aware of it. He's also telling us today that it will happen in our day, probably even more given the fact that we have electronic communication instantly worldwide.

**2 Timothy 4:3.** *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; [he's talking about brethren] but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;* (KJV)

They will seek out teachers to satisfy the itch in their ear. Here is the result.

4) *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* (KJV)

If people study with the motivation of wanting something new, regardless of whether it's true or not, then as we're told here, they can be turned away from the truth and they can start to believe fables and that is something we have to be very, very careful of.

So is our motivation to exalt the self or to tickle the ear or just to hear something new for the sake of hearing something new? Or is our motivation for studying to learn more about God and learn more about Jesus Christ so we can be more like them and be ready to marry Christ when Christ returns? And to worship them more perfectly and exalt them more perfectly because we know more about them. We know who they are.

Let's go to Colossians 1, verse 10. Again, an admonition of something that we should be doing in these end days.

**Colossians 1:10.** *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;* (KJV)

If we increase in the knowledge of God and then we apply it in our lives, we will be fruitful in every good work. But how can we be like Jesus Christ or be like the Father if

we don't know who they are? And we don't know everything there is to know about them. That should be the goal of our study. Let's go to 2 Timothy 2:15.

**2 Timothy 2:15.** *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, ... (KJV)*

Very direct command. If we want God to approve us, we need to study. Guess what the word for approved is. It's dokimos. We've talked about that before relative to 1 Corinthians 11:19. That verse tells us that there have to be heresies among us, divisions among us, so that those who are approved – those who are dokimos – might be made manifest. Dokimos means a coinage that is approved after it has been assayed. It is the right material, the right purity, the right weight. So if you had a dokimos coin, you had an approved coin for commerce.

We're told here in 2 Timothy 2:15 that if we want to be dokimos with God, if we want to be approved by God, we have to study the Bible. Study demonstrates to God that we want to know Him better, we want to learn more about Him. That's what study does and God looks to see, are we watching TV or are we studying God's word. Are we learning more about Him or are we learning more about the world? We're told here to study to show yourself approved, and

*15b) ... a workman ... (KJV)*

Workman means *a toiler or a laborer.*

*15 continued) ...that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)*

The Greek work for "rightly dividing" is just one word, Strong's 3718 and it literally means *to make a straight cut, that is, to dissect correctly the divine message.* To understand it and to understand all of the variables of God's word, the applications of God's word.

Our motivation should be to study more and to understand more about God.

Let's look at an example in the Old Testament of a man named Ahithophel. The setting is that David is on the run and his son, Absalom, has rebelled against his father, and Ahithophel was David's chief counselor but he has turned against David. I want to explain. The context is not about Bible study, but I want us to look at the attitude of Ahithophel and then we can apply it to Bible study.

**2 Samuel 15:12.** *And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. [notice this] And the conspiracy [against David] was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.*

...

31) *And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.*

32) *And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him [David] with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:*

33) *Unto whom David said [to Hushai], If thou passest on with me [come with me], then thou shalt be a burden unto me [because I have to feed you, clothe you and protect you]:*

34) *But if thou return to the city [to Jerusalem], and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. (KJV)*

David had this proposition.

37) *So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem. (KJV)*

Now to 2 Samuel 16:15.

**2 Samuel 16:15.** *And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. (KJV)*

Now Ahithophel was Absalom's chief counselor.

16) *And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.*

17) *And Absalom said [Absalom now is a little skeptical of what's going on] to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend? [Why didn't you stay with David?]*

18) *And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.*

19) *And again, whom should I serve? should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.*

20) *Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.*

21) *And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.*

22) *So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. (KJV)*

And this fulfils Nathan's prophecy when he confronted David in the first place in chapter 12. Now notice this about Ahithophel:

23) *And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom. (KJV)*

We don't often use the word or hear the word "oracle." I went back to Webster's 1828 Dictionary to see what Webster said back then and it said: *An oracle: any person reputed uncommonly wise whose determinations are not disputed.* So when Ahithophel gave advice, no one up to this point disputed a thing that he had to say.

**2 Samuel 17:1.** *Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, ... (KJV)*

Notice the attitude, the motivation and the focus of Ahithophel. This is what we want to focus on. This is Ahithophel's advice to Absalom.

1b) *... Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and [notice this] I will arise and pursue after David this night [not you, I will]:*

2) *And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:*

3) *And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.*

4) *And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.*

5) *Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.*

6) *And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not; speak thou.*

7) *And Hushai said unto Absalom, [Notice the wisdom here] The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time. (KJV)*

*Hushai was wise and he said Ahithophel's counsel is good, but it's not good right now, and let me tell you why.*

8) *For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.*

9) *Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.*

10) *And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt [when they heard the news of David's men defeating Absalom's men]: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.*

11) *Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. (KJV)*

In other words, he is saying not to send Ahithophel in his place.

*12) So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one.*

*13) Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. (KJV)*

That was his advice. Notice the result.

*14) And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom. (KJV)*

He was saying that if they followed the oracle of God (Ahithophel), bad things were going to happen to them. Notice the reaction of Ahithophel.

*23) And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed [for the very first time this has happened], he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father. (KJV)*

Ahithophel's motivation was to remain in power. His motivation was such that he would exalt himself by remaining in power and promote himself. Not to seek the truth, not to seek God's will, but to promote himself. Not to do what was right. He was looking at himself and what was best for himself. When he was no longer the center of attention, when he was no longer the oracle of God that everybody almost worshipped, when he was no longer viewed as "the man" he went out and committed suicide.

By looking at this example of Ahithophel, it doesn't apply to studying for the knowledge of God but it has a direct application to motivation, our motivation. What should our motivation in studying the Bible be? Should it be like Ahithophel, to have people look at us and say, "Look what he knows, look what she knows. They're smart." No. The motivation we find in Christ's first recorded sermon, Matthew 5:6. This should be our motivation in the daily study of the Bible.

**Matthew 5:6.** *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (KJV)*

If our motivation in studying the Bible is to learn more about God and Christ and their righteousness so that we can apply it in our lives, that should be our motivation. That should be why we take the time to study God's word every day of our life.

### 3. We dare not follow the examples of the Pharisees.

They are just the opposite of what we want to become. Let's go to Matthew 3:7. I'll read out of the New Kings James, if flows a little better and is not so clumsy.

**Matthew 3:7.** *But when he [referring to Christ] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

8) *Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, [that prove you've repented]*

9) *and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*

*(NKJV)*

What Christ is saying to them is that they were refusing to recognize Him., that they were refusing to look into the scriptures and see what they say about the coming of the Messiah and then to look at Jesus Christ and see if He fulfilled those scriptures. They refused to do that. And their excuse was they fell back on tradition saying they had Abraham. Then they accused Christ of all kinds of things.

Now let's go to Mark 7, beginning in verse 1. Another encounter with the Pharisees.

**Mark 7:1.** *Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.*

2) *And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.*

3) *For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. (KJV)*

Clarke, in his commentary, says this about the practice of washing hands:

The Jewish doctrine is this: If a man neglected the washing, he shall be eradicated from this world.

That's how serious they were. The Pharisees are really putting first things first here. They reject the Messiah but, boy, they wash their hands. It is just amazing. You can blaspheme Jesus Christ but if you wash your hands, you're alright, you're okay, you're a good guy. And then they put thousands of commandments added on to the plain and simple teaching in the Old Testament. Going on in verse 4 of Mark 7.

4) *And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.*

5) *Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?*

6) *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

7) *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

8) *For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

9) *And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. (KJV)*

That is a warning for us. It is very dangerous to hold on to a tradition that contradicts scripture. Christ was saying, "You don't even read the scriptures. You don't understand them and you hold onto what elders have said down through the centuries adding to the scriptures and you put more weight on that than what is in the scripture itself.

Now He's going back to what their studies should be, what their understanding should be.

10) *For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: (KJV)*

You find that in Exodus 21, verse 17. If you curse your parents, you're going to get stoned.

11) *But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, ... (KJV)*

It's interesting that word "Corban" means *treasury*, that's referring to the treasury at the temple.

11b) *... that is to say, a gift, [meaning a gift to the treasury of the temple] by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.*

Clarke's Commentary says this. It's called an offering of approach.

Something consecrated to the service of God in the temple by which a man had the privilege of approaching his maker.

Meaning something that's corban was giving something that was valuable to the temple but Christ is saying you do so at the cost of supporting your parents. And the temple, open arms, will take your gift but your parents are suffering as a result.

12) *And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; (KJV)*

Because he's donated this valuable sum of money, whatever it is, to the temple.

*13) Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. (KJV)*

It would be like today, some televangelist or megachurch or whatever, convinces a young person to donate a huge sum of money to their work, whatever it is, but in doing so, the young person's parents aren't supported. They go hungry, they're in poverty, they're not being taken care of. But it goes to the church's treasury. Depriving the parents of support and Christ is saying their tradition contradicts the very word of God.

So Christ's message in this third point, is that we dare not put tradition above God's word and we dare not follow the example of the Pharisees.

#### **4. Not believing God's word, not knowing God's word, can hamper what God can do in us, inside of us and through us.**

Not believing God's word, not understanding God's word, can hamper what God does in us. Let's go to Matthew 13 and we'll begin in verse 54. Christ was coming back to where He was born and where He grew up as a young kid.

**Matthew 13:54.** *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?*

*55) Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?*

*56) And his sisters, are they not all with us? ... (KJV)*

They're saying, "We knew Him as a kid just running around."

*56b) ... Whence then hath this man all these things? (KJV)*

I'll read verse 57 out of the New Living Translation because I think it's more accurate in these verses.

*57) And they were deeply offended and refused to believe him. ... (NLT)*

They were very familiar with Him as a young kid, now that He's grown up and saying these words, they reject Him. They refused to believe Him.

*57b) Then Jesus said to them "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own home town and among his own family.*

*58) And so they did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief. (NLT)*

They refused to acknowledge scripture, that Christ was the Messiah. It was right there and look at the results. Very few works. And look at the results of the whole nation rejecting Jesus Christ because the whole nation was destroyed not many years after

that. And who knows how many tens of thousands were killed as a result of the fact that they just refused to believe what the scriptures plainly said.

Now let's go to Psalms 78 and look at verse 40 about how we can limit God and what He can do through us. Referring to Ancient Israel.

***Psalms 78:40.*** *How oft did they [Ancient Israel] provoke him [God] in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!*

*41) Yea, they turned back and tempted [tested] God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. (KJV)*

Ancient Israel had a track record of refusing to believe and obey God and they would believe and obey the pagan religious practices around them and they would reject God even though they heard Him speak from the mountain. Think about that. All the miracles: coming out of Egypt, the fire on the top of the mountain, hearing this voice blasting at them and all of a sudden, they grieve Him in the desert and they refuse to believe Him and they go the wrong way.

The Hebrew word for "limit" here where it says they limited Him, another definition is *grieve*. They grieved Him. Now with that in mind, let's go to Ephesians 4, beginning in verse 24. Because we see that can happen. It happened in the New Testament and it can happen to us if we're not careful. This is what we have to be doing. These are our marching orders, for the New Testament, in these end days especially.

***Ephesians 4:24.*** *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

Now, how can we put on the new man that's created after God if we don't know who God is; if we don't study and learn about God and Jesus Christ.

*25) Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. (KJV)*

Love your neighbor as yourself. We're all neighbors.

*26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:  
27) Neither give place to the devil. (KJV)*

The new man doesn't give place to or a foothold to the devil.

*28) Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. (KJV)*

Rather than take.

*29) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (KJV)*

Now here's the tie-in with Psalms 78.

*30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV)*

How do we grieve the holy spirit of God? Well, first if we don't study God's word, that grieves God, that grieves God's spirit because we're not wanting the connection with God. And by understanding and studying with the right motivation so we know who God and Christ are, thereby we can become like them as we just read in verse 24. And so not believing God's word, not applying God's word, not understanding God's word grieves the holy spirit, God's very nature.

And our lack of knowledge of God and who God is can limit what God can do through us and in us. What is the solution? Part of the solution is daily Bible study. Understanding God's word and how it applies to us.

### **5. We cannot be like Christ and God, the Father and the Son, if we don't know who they are.**

How can we? How can you be like someone if you don't know them? When I grew up, baseball was the big deal, the NFL, the NBA wasn't there and baseball was the big deal. Every summer we would listen on the radio to baseball games. I loved the New York Yankees and I loved Mickey Mantle. I wanted to be like Mickey Mantle because he was just a fantastic athlete. Never to be repeated athlete. And I wanted to be like him and I studied him in the newsreels in the theaters and all that stuff. So if you want to be like somebody, you have to investigate who they are. And so if we want to be like God and Christ, we must investigate who God and Christ are.

Let's go to Colossians 3, verse 1. This first phrase caught me by surprise because you read the Bible for years and you skip right over it.

***Colossians 3:1. If ye then be risen ... (KJV)***

What? We're not resurrected. What does this mean? Well, you look at it and it means *to revive spiritually* and when we're converted and when we are baptized and when we have God's holy spirit, we are revived spiritually.

*1b) ... with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

*2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

*3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

*4) When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

5) *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

6) *For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: (KJV)*

If we don't know what God's will is, we can disobey.

7) *In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. (KJV)*

And all of us, before we were converted, we were out there in the slop, in the muck, spotted by the world, influenced by the world.

8) *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

9) *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; (KJV)*

Here's the key.

10) *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him [the new man]: (KJV)*

You see, if we don't know, if we don't have knowledge of who God is and who Christ is, how can we remake ourselves through the holy spirit from the old man to the new man in the image of God and Jesus Christ. You see here, knowledge is so important. Renewed in the knowledge of God and Christ.

Let's go to 2 Corinthians 10, verse 5 for a last scripture under this fifth point. Here's what we have to be doing. Paul is saying this.

**2 Corinthians 10:5.** *Casting down imaginations, ... (KJV)*

The margin of the King James says *reasonings*. So if you're going to cast down reasonings, they are obviously human reasonings and not Godly reasonings.

5b) *... and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, (KJV)*

We cast down everything that counters the knowledge of God, that doesn't sync with the knowledge of God as the Bereans did. They took what Paul said, looked at the scriptures to see if it was syncing with the scriptures.

5 continued) *...and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (KJV)*

How can we be more like the Father and the Son if we don't completely understand who they are? That should be the object of our study. This is why study is necessary for salvation. I heard an evangelist say years ago that he didn't study much anymore because he said he already knew all the basics. He'd been through the Bible a number of times and he was probably in his late 50s. Well, wow. So that means that after a certain date we know it all and there's no need to learn any more about who God is and who Christ is? You see this is why Bible study is necessary for salvation.

If we don't study the Bible with the right attitude, with the right motives as the Bereans did, not as the Pharisees did, then that will affect our salvation. It is salvational. Bible study is salvational.

Let's conclude now. Paul gives us a warning. This church was just wracked with problems and sin and acceptance of sin and all of that.

**1 Corinthians 15:34.** *Awake to righteousness, ... (KJV)*

He's saying, "You guys are sinning. You're allowing sin."

*34b) ... and sin not; (KJV)*

Notice the condemnation.

*34 continued) .. for some have not the knowledge of God: ... (KJV)*

Basic understanding of who God is and what His role is. In Greek, the phrase "have not the knowledge of God" means *ignorance*. He's saying they are ignorant of God. "You haven't studied, you haven't looked at who God is." Then he goes on to say:

*34 continued) ..I speak this to your shame. (KJV)*

What a condemnation. But there is a solution. Let's go to Proverbs 2:3. We'll see one scripture in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.

**Proverbs 2:3.** *Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;*

*4) If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;*

*5) Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. (KJV)*

If we cry after knowledge, we will find the knowledge.

*6) For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. (KJV)*

What does “out of His mouth” mean? It means the scriptures. They’re all God breathed. And if you want to know about God, study the scriptures Solomon is saying.

In the New Testament, 2 Peter 1, verse 2. Peter tells us how we can have grace and how we can have peace. And we’re going to need it as the world gets weirder and weirder and more dangerous every day it seems.

**2 Peter 1:2.** *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you ... (KJV)*

The word “grace” here means in the Greek *grace of manner or grace of action, especially the divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life.*

2) *Grace [God’s influence on you and how you conduct yourself] and peace be multiplied unto you [how?] through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, (KJV)*

He says if you want to have grace and peace, seek God, seek Christ, and know them, understand them. And the only way we can do that is through the scriptures and through God’s holy spirit that opens our mind to see what the scriptures are saying.

So the message here is that we, as God’s people; the mandate God has given us is to grow in the knowledge of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son to understand who they are, to understand their actions in the Old Testament and the New Testament and to apply it to ourselves.

So let’s dedicate ourselves to studying God’s word as we never have before, to know more about God and Jesus Christ.