

# Is Knowledge of the Truth Enough for Salvation?

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Over the past several years, our Father has revealed—at least to those who are willing to listen—a deeper understanding about Himself and about His Son. We're so thankful for that. This new knowledge about The Father and His Son is such a wonderful blessing.

Peter wrote his second Epistle somewhere between 64 and 67 A.D. shortly before his death. In 2 Peter 1:1 we see that we are so blessed to know the truth about God Almighty and His beloved Son in an ever-increasing way. This is obviously the introduction to this Epistle and he knew, in verse 14, that his time was short.

**2 Peter 1:1** *Simon Peter, [notice the first thing he says] a servant [he's a servant of Jesus Christ] and an apostle of Jesus Christ [he reminds everybody], to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ:*

2) *Grace and peace [grace meaning favor and mercy] be multiplied unto you [how is it multiplied unto you?] through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord ... (KJV)*

So, as we know more about the Almighty and His Son, then following on from that can come grace and peace. For me, this knowledge really has been transformative. It has changed my prayer life, it has changed the way I study and it has opened up my mind to Bible study as to who is doing what, who is saying what. Even as we sang hymns this morning, we look at those words and we understand who is speaking and who is being referred to, very specifically. Before it was just all kind of fuzzy. So, it has transformed our lives.

The question is, is knowledge—in and of itself—the key to salvation? Once we have the correct knowledge, will we be saved because of that knowledge?

There was an early New Testament sect—I think most of us are aware of that—the Gnostics, who believed that their esoteric knowledge would save them; that would allow them to have eternal life. With that in mind, I went on a church visit to the mid-west in the 1990's and we had Sabbath services. Before services there was an eighty-year-old widow whom I had known quite well and met several times before and had become friends with. As my wife and I walked in she came running up to me and was in tears. I hadn't seen her but she was in tears. I asked what on earth was wrong and she was sobbing and said, one of the members there—this member is a self-appointed prophecy guru—had told her earlier, before we arrived, that you must have intimate knowledge about all aspects of prophecy in order to be in the Kingdom. That's almost a direct quote. She was in tears because she was eighty years old, in failing health and her mental capacity was not what it used to be and she said "I can't put it all together. I read

it and sometimes five minutes later can't remember what I read all that clearly and I'm trying to put all aspects together and I just can't do it. Does that mean I am not going to be in God's Kingdom?" She was distraught over it. I had a talk with the fella but the fact was, he was missing the whole point of our calling, as we are going to see; by thinking that you must have certain knowledge in order to be saved.

The question is, is there something more required of us for salvation than just acquiring a certain level of knowledge? Is there more than that? Of course, that's the title for today.

### Is Knowledge of the Truth Enough for Salvation?

In Point number one we are going to ask a question and we all need to ask this question because it involves our intent—our motivation.

#### **1. What is our motivation in acquiring knowledge from God's word?**

Let's see an example of an improper motivation by going to 2 Timothy 3:1. Obviously Paul is writing to the those in the church then and by extension he is writing to us today.

**2 Timothy 3:1** *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*  
(KJV)

Obviously, we are 2000 years closer to the day than when these words were written.

2) *For men shall be lovers of their own selves* [meaning "self-interested, self-centered", maybe even thinking self-important], *covetous, boasters* [boasters about the self-], *proud* [about the self-], *blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

3) *Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent* [meaning "without self-control"], *fierce, despisers of those that are good,*

4) *Traitors, heady,* [notice here] *high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

5) *Having a form of godliness* [outwardly], *but denying the power thereof* [meaning who God is and what His power and might are]: *from such turn away.*  
(KJV)

Verse 7 gets more to the point today.

7) *Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (KJV)

Learning all kinds of things but not coming to the critical knowledge of the truth. Why would that be—we can ask ourselves. Could it be that their motivation is not right? That they are learning for the wrong reasons and because they are learning for the wrong reasons, God isn't revealing the truth to them because their heart isn't right? Is our motivation to elevate the self? To satisfy pride or vanity. In 1 Corinthians 8:1 we see that

knowledge in and of itself, without the proper motivation, can create some problems. I'm going to read this out of the New King James. Unless otherwise noted, it's out of the King James.

**1 Corinthians 8:1** *Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. [Each one of us has a certain level of knowledge; no question about that] Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. (NKJV)*

The New English Bible translates it as, *knowledge breeds conceit. It is love that builds.* I think we have all seen situations—maybe even in ourselves at times—where some can become prideful over a special bit of knowledge that they have, or knowledge in a certain area of scripture that they have. I think we have all experienced being on the receiving end of somebody who says, “I know the truth about this aspect of prophecy, I've got it figured out and you don't.” We've all experienced that. In 1 John 2:16 we see that John hits the nail on the head about this—that we are all susceptible to pride and we have to be careful about this.

**1 John 2:16** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life [that can cover many aspects, not just knowledge, throughout our lives, all aspects of our lives], is not of the Father, but is of the world. (KJV)*

It's of the world. Relative to the subject we are covering today, pride can be a problem and if it is, what that does is allows Satan a foothold. Anytime we have pride and we focus on the self and our interests and our concerns and desires, we open the door for Satan to get a foothold in our lives. Then you see what Satan wants to do once he gets a foothold. He leads us astray; he leads us away from the truth and away from a close relationship with God and Jesus Christ. That is his goal. So, knowledge for knowledge's sake, or knowledge to satisfy our pride should not be our motivation.

The question is, what is the proper motivation? Hopefully we have that figured out by now, but our motivation—our proper motivation—should be to know more about the Almighty and to know more about His Son. This Being, whose name is Yehovah—He said that's His name—and as many of us have talked about many times, this Being is a Being Who has always been and never had a beginning. He always will be—He will never have an end. He exists now, He is present now and is the living God, the Almighty God, the Most High God. Why would we not want to get close to and know more about this Being? Not to elevate us, but so we can know more about Him, learn to satisfy Him and learn to please Him so that we can find favor in His eyes and ultimately be part of His family. We want to know more about His Son. The One who lived a perfect life and then suffered torture and death for me and my sins personally—and for everyone else—all mankind.

Then after His resurrection He became the forerunner of our salvation. We are told this in Hebrews 6. He is also our intercessor; He is also our Mediator and High Priest and also our older Brother and our Advocate. We are going to see this in just a bit. So, it's

obvious what our motivation should be if we have two Beings that have always existed and will always exist and They have a plan of salvation for us. As we are part of that plan, would we not want to get to close to Them by knowing Them better and better over time? Having nothing to do with us—meaning to satisfy our ego, desires or pride—but to get to know Them because of who and what They are. That should be our motivation and we have to always ask that question.

The second point I would like to cover:

## **2. Our knowledge of the truth should lead us to action.**

Knowledge isn't something just to keep to ourselves. Knowledge isn't something that we just take pleasure over, but doesn't have any effect on our day to day lives. The knowledge of the truth should lead us to action. In James 3, James has a lot to say about work and deeds but notice what he says in James 3:13.

**James 3:13** *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? [who has received knowledge, who has knowledge as part of his makeup] let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. (KJV)*

So, take the knowledge and then demonstrate good conduct by works and using wisdom. The NIV says,

*Let him show it by his good life, by deed done in the humility that comes from wisdom. (NIV)*

Take the knowledge and put it into action by what we do and say and what we think. The point is we need to do something with our knowledge. Not just, as an example, a professor you read about somewhere who is surrounded by books in his study. He loves to read and acquire knowledge and just stays in this study of his and is happy acquiring knowledge but nothing is done with that knowledge. Our goal should be to apply the knowledge of the truth in living our lives. How we live our lives every day, how we relate to other people and how we relate to our Father and His Son. We can go to Romans 2:13, to read this just for emphasis. I know you know it. Paul emphasis this very point, as does James, two of the leading apostles, the great men of that New Testament church.

**Romans 2:13** *(For not the hearers of the law are just [just means to be "innocent" before God's eyes, to be in a right standing with God Almighty] before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (KJV)*

By doing it and by obeying God's law and the truth in God's word, then we can be in a justified state with our Father and with His Son—innocent in God's eyes. Now let's go to 1 Peter 2:22, which talks about this too, in addition. That our knowledge should lead to action, lead to works, lead to deeds.

1 Peter 1:22 *Seeing ye have purified your souls ["life"] in obeying the truth through the Spirit [the Holy Spirit gives us the power that we did not have before to obey God's law] unto [what is the goal?] unfeigned love of the brethren [unfeigned means "not fake, sincere and honest" and that is what we do, we love the brethren], see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:*

In other words, we are to love the brethren fervently, not lukewarmly. Not in a so-so or ho-hum manner but we are to love one another with fervency. So, what should be the goal of our knowledge and our subsequent action? Ephesians 4:13 shows us our actions should have goals. We do something because we want to accomplish something or there is a goal we are trying to achieve. Ephesians 4:13 gets to the heart of that.

**Ephesians 4:13** *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God [we come into that ever increasing knowledge of who Christ is, what He has done, what His titles are], unto a perfect [that means "complete"] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (KJV)*

We take the knowledge and we look at who Christ is and then look at ourselves and see how we measure up to the example of Jesus Christ. We note the difference, where we have to and what we have to improve on. Then we get to work diminishing that difference between who we are and who Christ is. The Greek word for "knowledge" here—the knowledge of the Son of God—is Strong's #1922 and it's epignosis where we get the English word *knowledge*, from "nosis". "*Epignosis*" means "full discernment". The goal is to have full discernment of Jesus Christ. As we approach full discernment, then we know more and more about what He did, what He said, the example He set and how we should follow that. The more we know about Him the more closely we can follow His example.

Now back to 2 Peter 3—we know this one by heart, you don't even need to turn there—2 Peter 3:18.

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

We generally focus on the knowledge part of it but it says two things; grow in grace and knowledge. *Grace* here in this verse is from the Greek word Charis—to grow in Charis and Thayer tells us that means "goodwill or loving kindness". So, this verse tells us that we are to grow in goodwill and we are to grow in lovingkindness and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of Christ leads us to grow more in grace, in loving kindness and goodwill because frankly that is the example that Christ set. When He was on the cross what did He say? *Forgive them, they don't know what they're doing.* He said a lot more as we will see in just a bit. We are to grow in the grace and knowledge, to have Christ's goodwill, to have His lovingkindness as part of our very character. Of course, that leads to deeds and to actions. So, our goal is to put our knowledge to work and be like our Father and to be like His Son. In Colossians 3:10. Paul is saying we have to do something and we have to put in the work to do that.

**Colossians 3:10** *And have put on the new man ...* (KJV)

When you put on something it means you work to get there.

10 continued) ... *which is renewed in knowledge [epignosis] after the image of him [referring to Christ] that created him: [referring to the new man].* (KJV)

In the NLT, it is very interesting.

**Colossians 3:10** *You have clothed yourself with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ who created this new nature within you.* (NLT)

So rather than aggrandizing yourself you want to take that knowledge and use it to be like our older Brother who set us the example, who is the forerunner of our salvation. The fact is, God watches us to see what we do with the knowledge that we have. Do we take this and bury it as the parables show is a possibility? Or do we use it to grow in character to be more like our Father and His Son. Peter said—we won't turn there but in 1 Peter 4:17—judgment is on the house of God right now and we have to understand that and realize our time is now. The rest of mankind, their time is not yet but ours is now. Christ said twice in Matthew 7 that you will know them by their fruits. What are fruits? Those are deeds, words and things we do. God is watching us to see what fruits we develop with the knowledge that He reveals.

Benjamin Franklin—I love his quotes—said something very pertinent to this; “Well done is better than well said.” Talking is easy, we all know that. Talking is cheap, we know that too. It's putting the talk into action or putting the belief into action. Ending this second point, we have to do something with the knowledge God is revealing to us.

That leads to the third point.

### **3. Knowledge of the truth ultimately leads us to the new commandment.**

Knowledge of the truth—the meaning of God and Christ and Who they are in the record of scripture—leads us to the new commandment. With that in mind go to John 13:31. We read these scriptures at Passover time. We are breaking into the narrative. This is after the bread and wine and foot washing, out of the New King James. That is over now and we break into what Christ is saying and what He wants to impart to the disciples.

**John 13:31** *So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.* (NKJV)

Meaning the Son of Man—Christ.

32) *If God is glorified in Him [in Christ], God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.* (NKJV)

He would be glorified by His resurrection, by sitting on the right hand of His Father in heavenly realms.

33) *Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. [They didn't understand this of course] You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you.* (NKJV)

So now, because you can't come and I am going away ...

34) *A new commandment I give to you, [our ears should perk up] that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

35) *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (NKJV)

What He is saying is, you can have all the knowledge in the world—you can have it all figured out—but if you don't have love for one another, I don't want any part of you.

Now go to chapter 15:12. This is continuing in the same narrative, Christ is still talking, and we are just jumping ahead a bit. The disciples are there, He's talking with His disciples, continuing to give them important information before He is taken captive.

**John 15:12** *This is my commandment, [He's saying "I'm commanding you"] That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* (KJV)

Meaning you need to love one another to the extent that I love you, in the same manner I love you, with the sincerity that I love you—you need to do that.

13) *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* (KJV)

Willing to die for your friends, but you can also lay down your life in service to your friends, in service to the brethren.

14) *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* (KJV)

He just gave them the commandment. It's just a shame that in the greater churches of God, between the various groups and individuals, sometimes we don't see a lot of love and yet Christ said this is what I'm commanding you to do. It must not be taken very seriously in some quarters.

Now go to 1 John 2:1 and remember this is the same author who we just read from. The same author who walked with Jesus Christ for roughly three and a half years. He

was favored by Christ in many ways because of his personality and his age. Same author and frankly the same emphasis.

**1 John 2:1** *My little children [you have to understand he's getting older—ninety years old], these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate [one of Christ's titles] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

*2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (KJV)*

Because every human being who has ever been born is ultimately a child of God and Christ died for each one of them.

*3) And hereby we do know that we know him ... (KJV)*

Let's just stop there. What is the litmus test? How do we know that we truly know Jesus Christ? He tells us:

*3 continued) ... if we keep his commandments. (KJV)*

Knowledge put into action and He told us what the commandment is; My commandment is—I have a new commandment for you—that you love the brethren.

*4) He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

*5) But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: (KJV)*

As we more and more keep the word of God more accurately as we go forward.

*5 continued) ... hereby know we that we are in him. [When we keep His commandments.]*

*6) He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. (KJV)*

As we know more and more about Jesus Christ, we understand Who He is, we understand scripture better and understand His example better, then we can better apply it to ourselves and walk as He walked—following His example.

*7) Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. [Then He goes on to explain.] The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. (KJV)*

Now, we understand that for the Jewish brethren, they would understand that perfectly clearly.



- 8) *Again, a new commandment* [referring to what He had said in John 13:34, what Christ said rather] *I write unto you, which thing is true in him [in Christ] and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*
- 9) *He that saith he is in the light* [in Christ's light, following Christ's example and commandments], *and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*
- 10) *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*
- 11) *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*  
(KJV)

He is obviously talking spiritually. Darkness can blind us spiritually and we don't know it sometimes. I think if we are all honest with ourselves, we will look at ourselves and say yes, in my past life I have been spiritually blind here at that point and this point in my life and I just did not see it; I was just spiritually blind. He says, he that hates his brother in the beginning of verse 11, it's interesting that Greek word *hates* is Strong's #3404 and it's *miseo* and it means "to detest" but it can also mean to "love less" or "to love less in comparison". Remember what Christ said in Luke 14, counting the cost—we covered that when we were counseled for baptism—Christ said if any man come to Me and *miseo* not his father, his mother, his brothers, his sisters, his own life also, he can't be My disciple. In other words, if any man comes to Me and "loves less" his brothers and sisters and father and mother than himself, he can't be My disciple. John is saying here that he who hates his brother or loves his brother less than he loves himself, walks in darkness. We see that all around us sadly, in the greater church—within God's people. Those who love others less than they love themselves, those who love less others in other fellowships than they love themselves, or those who love less the guy on the street than they love themselves. Given Christ's words, it's incumbent on us to take this knowledge and put it into action and be all the more diligent to love the brethren as much as we love ourselves. At least, as much as we love ourselves. We also have to keep in mind, who is the being who wants us to look down on people or to look down on our brothers and sisters or to condemn or judge other people—who is the author of all that, Satan himself. We just have to always keep that in mind.

We have to ask the question, why does John say, old commandment in verse 7. He's building a contrast between the old and new and what does he have in mind? The old commandment was there from the beginning. Look at 1 John 3:11. He clarifies this as we walk through his writings.

**1 John 3:11** *For this is the message* [the King James margin says "this is the commandment"] *that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.* (KJV)

What is that commandment? Let's go back to Leviticus 19:18 and see what that commandment is. It is the old commandment, the one that was there in the beginning. This was applicable back then but it is more applicable to us because we have the very

Spirit of God that allows us to keep this, as we are going to see in a minute, in a more meaningful way.

**Leviticus 19:18** [God tells us through Moses] *Thou shalt not avenge* [you don't go to get even, you don't get back at somebody], *nor bear any grudge* [that's hard to do sometimes when somebody does badly towards you or me, it's easy to develop a grudge] *against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD.* (KJV)

I am telling you this. This is what John is referring to as the old commandment that was in place from the beginning. As we know ancient Israel did not have the spirit or the heart to fulfill that. We won't turn there but we know the scripture in Deuteronomy 5 where Yehovah said, *Oh that I wish there was such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always*, and they just didn't do it; they didn't have the heart, they didn't have the spirit. We won't turn there but in Jeremiah 9, he said all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in their heart. They just didn't have it and of course as we know, we do. Because we have it there are greater expectations of us. This is why John said in verse 7 in 1 John 2, an old commandment. Then he says in verse 8, a new commandment. What is he talking about? The new commandment is because they would be able to keep it spiritually. Whereas ancient Israel had no hope of that because God's spirit wasn't available to the average Israelite. It was new because they could keep it spiritually. We know in Romans 7 that the law is spiritual. Once we have God's Spirit in us, God and Jesus Christ living in us, we are able to keep the law with a new dimension, new understanding and new power. Christ had to teach the Jews, and by extension us today, that the law is spiritual. To that point, in His very first recorded sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, right off the bat he hit that point; that the law is spiritual and we must keep it spiritually.

Remember Christ's words, John 13:34, we just read it.

**John 13:34** *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you [meaning to the extent that I love you], that ye also love one another.*

35) *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples ...* (KJV)

No one up to that point—the night He was betrayed in John 13—understood the depth of love that was necessary to be Christ's disciple. They didn't understand it at that moment in time. They would come to understand it. The love required to be Christ's disciple, as He would show the next day, is that, in order to follow in His footsteps, we have to love our enemies, which He did on the cross. We have to love those who hate us and spit on us and abuse us and murder us and torture us. We have to have enough love that we could love them who do such things to us. So, we see that Christ made it very, very clear what the new commandment entails because of the life that he lived and the example that He set.

That leads us to the fourth and last point.

#### **4. When we obey the new commandment, we demonstrate our love for our Father and His Son.**

Each time we obey that commandment we are showing God Almighty that we want to follow in Christ's footsteps and obey the new commandment. We do that by loving one another through the Holy Spirit. In Mark 12:28. Christ emphasized this over and over and over. Yet sometimes—I'm speaking to myself in my life—I didn't obey that, I did not realize that, I didn't realize the extent of this commandment.

**Mark 12:28** *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he [referring to Jesus Christ] had answered them well, asked him, which is the first commandment of all? (KJV)*

Which is the first? The Greek word for *first* here is *protos* and we get our English word *prototype* from that. If you build an airplane—today you put it in a computer—when I grew up you put it on drafting tables and drew it out and then you built it, and the first one is called the *prototype*. You hope it flies, test it and then you can make other models after that—production models. But it is the first—the *prototype*. The Greek word for *protos* means “the foremost in time or place or order or importance”. First in time, first in importance. So, this man is asking which is the *protos* commandment. Which is the very first one—the most important one.

29) *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear [if you look at all the Hebrew translations it means hear and obey], O Israel; The Lord our God [again you put the translations—we covered this before and it means the Lord our God only, no other gods] is one Lord:*

30) *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first [the protos] commandment. (KJV)*

When you think about it, you see Yehovah has always existed and we are told in 1 John 4—twice there in verse 8 and 18—that God is love. What John is telling us is, His defining characteristic—of Yehovah—is love. When you think about it, if Yehovah has never had a beginning, love has always existed because love is our Father's defining characteristic. So along with our Father and His Son never having a beginning, love has never had a beginning either. Love has always been.

31) *And the second [the man didn't ask for a second but Christ is giving him a second so therefore it must be extremely important and because they are tied together you can't have one without the other] is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *second* means “second in time, second in place, second in rank”. The Father has always lived, He is supreme. The creation of mankind came later so

therefore this commandment is important but it came second in time because there was—we use the word time and it is a physical concept—but there was a time when mankind did not exist.

32) [The scribe is responding] *And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:*

33) *And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. (KJV)*

What a statement! I can only imagine how the Pharisees reacted to hearing that because of their focus, which was on the physical. Of course, we have Pharisees among us today who focus on the physical. We need to learn that spiritual intent and spiritual aspect of God's law. Going on in verse 34, notice Christ's response.

34) *And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

All of us here today, deep in our hearts, wish and hope that God right now is saying that about us. That we are not far from the Kingdom of God. By our fruits our Father knows us, and we hope that is indeed the case.

Christ, in addition to giving us these two commandments, he added to the law a spiritual dimension that did not exist before—very important. Go back to Matthew 5:21 to the Sermon on the Mount. This is so important to Christ because He obviously brought it out in His first recorded sermon. It's there for us because He is adding a spiritual dimension and that is part and parcel to the new commandment.

**Matthew 5:21** [Christ is speaking] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: (KJV)*

He's referring to Exodus 20:13 and other scriptures.

22) *But I say unto you, [He's adding something] That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

23) *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; (KJV)*

There is a division, there is a barrier, there is a problem. Today we would transfer it into that when you kneel down and pray or take out your Bible and study and realize that your brother has something against you—verse 24.

24) *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

25) *Agree with thine adversary quickly ... (KJV)*

Of course, this is one of the most ignored scriptures in the Bible. Knowing your brother has something against you, we just sweep it under the rug and go about our merry way as though it doesn't matter. But it does matter. Christ did the same thing with adultery—He added a spiritual dimension, verse 27.

27) *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: [referring to Exodus 20:14].*

28) *But I say unto you [notice what He adds], That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (KJV)*

He is adding a spiritual dimension that involves the mind, the intent, the motive, what's going on between our ears—He adds that to the deeds and is saying that the law means a lot more than just what you do. It's your motivation behind what you do and the thoughts in your head behind what you do outwardly.

In addition to this, Christ also changed many things regarding the law. That's important to note here in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. He changed the justification for divorce, verse 31.

31) *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: (KJV)*

That's found in Deuteronomy 24:1. Then He's going to repeating this phrase over and over.

32) *But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication [I'm reading out of the King James; or sexual immorality], causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (KJV)*

He changed the justification for divorce. Then, if that wasn't enough, He eliminated the taking of vows.

33) *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: (KJV)*

You should perform an oath unto God—Yehovah. We find that in Numbers 30:2 and Deuteronomy 23:23 and that was told to ancient Israel and they were obeying that up to that time.

34) *But I say unto you, Swear not at all [don't even do it]; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

35) *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

36) *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

37) *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. (KJV)*

He eliminated the taking of vows. Then guess what else he eliminated; He eliminated taking an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth.

38) *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: (KJV)*

You can find that in Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21. It's quite frequent in the Old Testament.

39) *But I say unto you, [He's saying just the opposite of what they had been taught and what was in the Old Testament in this case] That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

40) *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

41) *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (KJV)*

And the Roman authorities had the authority—the soldiers and administrators had the authority to do that. Rather than go a mile, go two.

42) *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. (KJV)*

What Christ was instructing is, don't return evil with evil. I will have to tell you; I can't tell you the number of times since I've been baptized that I returned evil with evil. I got caught up in a fight and somebody was fighting against me or saying something against me or slandering against me and guess what I did—I fought right back. Christ says turn the other cheek—if you're on the field of battle, just turn the other cheek and walk away rather than returning evil with evil.

He also eliminated hating your enemy. This is tough one—hating your enemy.

43) *Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. (KJV)*

For times' sake we won't go back but in Deuteronomy 23:3-6, Moses told Israel, don't seek the peace or the prosperity of the Ammonite or the Moabite because the Ammonite and the Moabite made Israel's life miserable; they killed the weak, they killed

children, they made their lives miserable. So, Moses said don't seek their peace, don't make an agreement with them, don't go and appease them, he said don't even do anything to affect or make them prosper. This is one area of scripture that this is referring to. Love your neighbor, hate your enemy.

*44) But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (KJV)*

Frankly, I think this is probably the hardest admonishment and commandment to do. Christ did that. He followed His Father's commandments here and repeated this. He's not doing this on His own as we'll see in a minute. The fact is, Christ set the example on the cross, forgiving His enemies. The onus is on us to do exactly the same. Why do we do that?

*45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun [the Father makes the sun that the Father created] to rise on the evil and on the good, [the sun is not a discriminator] and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

*46) For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

*47) And if ye salute your brethren only [he says "only" because the Jews of the day wouldn't even speak to a tax collector], what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*

*48) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (KJV)*

Christ instructed us rather than hate our enemies, to love our enemies—just the opposite. Do good to those that hate you and say horrible things about you; very, very difficult but our Father watches us to see if we will indeed do that.

Is Christ just doing this on His own somehow and He just slipped it in without His Father not even knowing about it? Of course not, He came to do the will of His Father. In John 12, again shortly before His death in verse 49 Christ didn't do a thing without His Father's permission, without His Father's instruction, without His Father's teaching.

**John 12:49** *For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. (KJV)*

It can't get any clearer than that. Christ and His Father were on the same page, Christ did nothing without the approval of His Father, the instruction of His Father. Christ changed the law and added spiritual dimension to the law. Why did He do that? Because His followers would soon have the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to fulfill and obey that new commandment. To love those who hate you, rather than hate them, to return good for evil; not possible humanly, but it is possible through the power of the

Holy Spirit. They would be able to obey the law spiritually because they would soon have the power of the Holy Spirit in them.

Christ sums up the matter in Matthew 7:12. He sums it up at the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:12** *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.* (KJV)

This sums it all up. Verse 6, last four commandments. Whatever you want somebody to do to you, you do that to them and we call that love. God loves us and then, because of the Holy Spirit in us, we shed that love, we take that love and give it to others. Matthew 7:12 just sums it all up.

Now go to 1 John 4 and see again—we saw John's recording of Christ's words and now we see in John's Epistle how that theme keeps reappearing every few verses.

**1 John 4:11** *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*  
12) *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*  
13) *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* (KJV)

This is what the new commandment is all about. Jumping to verse 16.

16) *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love [that is His defining characteristic]; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* (KJV)

Verse 19.

19) *We love him, because he first loved us.* (KJV)

He first called us and opened up our mind to what He had to say.

20) *If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother [loves his brother less than he loves himself], he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* (KJV)

In the next chapter, chapter 5:2 out of the NIV.

**1 John 5:** *This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out [meaning doing] his commands.* (NIV)

If we follow God's commandments, all that we just read that was amplified at the Sermon on the Mount and many other places—if we carry out His commandments—



that is how we love the children of God. Love is more important than knowledge. Last Sabbath Terry came right up to this scripture but we are going to talk about this. We will go to 1 Corinthians 13:1, you know where we are going. The NLT has what I think is a very good translation of this passage. It puts it into down to earth language.

**1 Corinthians 13:1** *If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels [think about that, if I could speak any language and he amplifies it by not just an earthly, human language but any language in heaven], but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

2) *If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.*

3) *If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.*

4) *Love is patient [hard to be patient sometimes] and kind [hard to be kind sometimes in the face of somebody coming at you]. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud*

5) *or rude. It does not demand its own way. (NLT)*

Because love esteems others better than ourselves and therefore we don't demand what we want.

5 continued) ... *It is not irritable, and [notice this] it keeps no record of being wronged. (NLT)*

How many times have we, or we have witnessed in the church—we'll stop here—people carrying grudges in the church. I've heard sermon after sermon of men blasting other men, in years past going back to the Worldwide days—this guy did this to me and that guy did that to me and you could tell by the tone of voice that it's still a burr under their saddle, there is still a grudge there. If we're honest with ourselves, we've had grudges in the past or maybe we even carry a grudge now, if we dig deep enough. Paul is saying, love keeps no record of wrongs.

6) *It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.*

7) *Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (NLT)*

No matter the depth of the trial, it endures.

8) ... *But love will last forever! (NLT)*

It's always existed because it's the prime characteristic of Yehovah and He will live forever so love will always exist—always.

8 continued) ... *Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages<sup>[b]</sup> and special knowledge will become useless. (NLT)*

As we're going to see, it will disappear at a certain point.

9) *Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete ...* (NLT)

That is so true of us human beings. We just don't know it all, we will never know it all. Try as we might, we will never know it all. We know just a little.

9 continued) *... and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture!*

11) *When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.*

12) *-Now we see things imperfectly [we just don't get it all because we are humans], like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then [when we become spirit] we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete [this is Paul who studied at the feet of Gamaliel, who talked to Jesus Christ in the desert directly and he's saying all that I know is partial and incomplete, I don't know it all], but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.*

13) *Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.* (NLT)

God is watching us now to see if we get it, if we understand it.

So, let's quickly conclude. We have been blessed with a deeper understanding of our Father and His Son and we have to be careful about our motivation, not to exalt the self but to learn more about Them so we can be like Them. That should be our goal in living our lives; to be like the Father and His Son and to do things according to His will. Knowledge by itself is not enough for salvation. It is just not enough. Go to Ephesians 3:19 for the final scripture.

**Ephesians 3:19** *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge [the Moffit and New International says surpasses knowledge and that's what the Greek means; "to throw beyond the usual mark, to surpass"], that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* (KJV)

We think about it and love does indeed surpass all knowledge. We are told in 1 John 3:14 that we know we have passed from death to life, how? Because we love the brethren. Scripture after scripture tell us that love for God and love for our fellow man are the most necessary attributes for salvation.

So, is knowledge enough for salvation? Absolutely not. We need to love God with all our might, all our mind, all our being, all our strength and we need to keep the new commandment through the power of the Holy Spirit that is in us, in loving our brothers and sisters as much as Christ loves our brothers and sisters.