

Ever Learning but Never Knowing

by Irvin Himmel

Wrong Attitude

In **2 Tim. 3:7**, Paul described certain people in the following manner: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They were so laden with sin and led by carnal lusts that they were "taken in" by men of corrupt minds.

Wrong Sources

Some of today's learners are never able to obtain the truth because they look to the wrong sources. Such are they who go to an encyclopedia to get information about the church of Christ, or about baptism, or about the Lord's supper. Encyclopedias serve useful purposes, but they are not God's word. One must go to the Bible to find God's truth about the church, the way of redemption, baptism, worship, etc. It is possible to learn a lot from standard reference books that men have written and still not come to know the divinely-revealed truth that comes through the Bible.

Wrong Subjects

Others are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth because their interest is in the wrong subjects. A person may be exceptionally well informed about politics, economics, science, and human philosophy but terribly ignorant of the sacred scriptures. Some who study the Bible dwell more on technicalities and trivialities than on the practical themes and basic principles that are revealed.

Then there are others who are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth due to a wrong attitude toward truth. They seem to suppose that storing information in the intellect is all that matters. For a variety of reasons, they go to the Bible and study it, but they lack one thing that is indispensable to saving knowledge: the desire to obey God. Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (**John 7:17**). Willingness to do the will of God is essential to knowing the truth. Intellectual understanding avails only when applied. One may be able to quote scripture but not able to relate the meaning to himself. The knowledge that saves is applied knowledge. James warned, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (**Jas. 1:22**).

Do Not Recognize Truth

Finally, there are people who are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth because they do not recognize the truth. They are intrigued by the novel, fascinated by modern ideas, and charmed by speculations. Blown about by every wind of doctrine, in their instability they hurry past the fixed and eternal foundation.



Quita Wilson (Amy Godwin's mom)	Jesse and Martha Godwin (Troy's parents)	Bob Simpson	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's grandfather)	Mary Edwards (Sandra Chason's mom)	Vicki Stevens	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Danylu Burnett (Joanetta's mom)	Maria Williams	Carla Humphrey (Seth's mom)	Howard Jones (Timothy's Father)
Betty Bradford	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Earl & Ann Mitchell (Debbi Coleman's dad)	Abbie Harrison
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	EB & Ara Belle Rich (Joanetta's uncle and aunt)	Mike Scalf (Ada Owen's brother)	Sandlyn Fultz
Kimzey Simpson (Bob's daughter-in-law)	William and Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	Cheri Russell

January Birthdays

- 1-David Ogle
- 2-Chuck Hunt
- 4-Phillip Box
- 6-Erica Seymore
- 7-Charles Painter
- 11-Spencer Hall
- 11-Shepherd Hall
- 12-Rosita Chavez
- 14-Andrew Williamson
- 16-Preston Jennings
- 17-Sarah Cicero
- 18-Scott Vaughn
- 18-Nakia Strickland
- 18-Allison Bishop
- 21-Jacob Jerkins
- 21-Britton Stagner
- 23-Connor Godwin
- 23-Cristin Chavez
- 25-Caleb Daniels
- 25-Tucker Mills
- 27-Hannah Slay
- 27-Terez Strickland
- 28-Juliana Anderson
- 28-Reagan Wiginton
- 31-Jennifer Daniels

News and Notes

- ☒ - The college devotional is at Jared Johnson's tonight with Andy Cantrell teaching!
- ☒ - Cards for our meeting are in the foyer. Please be telling and inviting others!
- ☒ - Thanks for the efforts of so many to make our student weekend study a success!
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Chandler Sullivan and Hannah Morris!
- ☒ - The deadline for RYC ladies class registration is this Friday.
- ☒ - Ada Owen's mother, Peggy Scalf, is now in hospice care in GA.
- ☒ - Please park on the grass as able starting next Sunday!
- ☒ - Former student, Sandlyn Fultz, will meet with a surgeon in MN at the Mayo Clinic in March.
- ☒ - Nakia Strickland's dad, Kip Reid, had successful back surgery on Monday!
- ☒ - The signup list for preparing the Lord's Supper in 2020 is on the bulletin board in foyer.

The Auburn Beacon



Four Challenges of Evangelism

By Andy Cantrell



Thoughts to Ponder

As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. (**Acts 8:3-4**)

This article has two purposes. The first is to challenge each of us to examine why we don't do more talking about the Lord and His things with those we encounter. I apologize if I have made a wrong assumption about you, but I suspect you are like me and know you could do better. The second is to share some ideas that have helped the Christians who gather where I live to start speaking up, pay attention to opportunities, speak boldly, and communicate more clearly than we had previously. The following thoughts come from challenging discussions we have had in what our Deacons serving in the area of evangelism have called "Evangelism Workshops."

There are countless reasons why Christians struggle when it comes to evangelism, but I believe the following four categories cover most, if not all, those reasons. They are Care, Consciousness, Courage, and Craft. Most of the excuses we are willing to vocalize come from the last three areas. We are willing to admit we need to pay better attention (Consciousness) and are often scared to speak up (Courage), and that we don't know how or what or when to say the things we should (Craft). But it is rare to hear someone vocalize the most important (and most common) reason we don't share His things like we should: Care.

CARE:

Here is the truth about me. I often don't care enough about what God is doing in the universe to get involved in His business. Along with that, I often haven't cared that the most important thing God is doing in the universe involves the souls of the people walking by me each day—souls that "God so loved" that "He gave His only begotten Son" so that they would "not perish, but have eternal life." Can we please be honest about this? We can make all the excuses we want about why so many of us remain reticent about our Lord, but what truly is the source of our lack of Consciousness, our missing Courage, and our lazy or haphazard Craft if not Care? Everything follows this! In fact, it is my belief that if we care enough about God and those made in God's image, we will become more aware of opportunities, find the boldness to speak or serve, and diligently discipline ourselves toward saying things in such a way that it will "give grace to those who hear."

Here are couple thoughts about how to develop greater care. Sacrifice and service come from a realization of God's mercy toward me (**Rom. 12:1-2**). "We love, because He first loved us" (**1 Jn.4:19**). I must think more intensely about God's love and mercy offered me. I must thank Him more frequently for His loving kindness. I must enthusiastically engage my heart and mind in the prescribed disciplines of remembering Jesus, thankful prayer, noble-minded listen-

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Elders
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

- Bible Class 9:30 AM
- Worship 10:20 AM
- Evening Worship 6:00 PM

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 Evangelist and Editor

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ing to God's Word, probing meditation, and all the other instructions God designed to train me to love Him and those He loves! I understand these are activities we participate in frequently. The problem is that many of us, somewhere along this journey, forgot that going through the motions was designed by God to stir our emotions.

CONSCIOUSNESS:

Jesus had to train His disciples to be conscious of opportunities. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (**Matt. 10:37**) surely would have been as uncommon a viewpoint then as it is now. When the Lord spoke to Paul that night in Corinth and revealed, "I have many people in this city" (**Acts 18:10**) it surely would have been as shocking to him as it is to us. The key to both these revelations is that the disciples who heard these words must CARE enough about God's "harvest" and His "people" to actually become the "workers" and "go on speaking." Recognizing that every heart is soil (**Matt. 13**) and that every aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5**) contains the seeds of truth that can be planted in the lives of those around us is a necessary realization. Once realized and meditated on, every person, interaction, word, and deed become an opportunity for us.

I find it interesting that when Paul encouraged the Colossians to, "Conduct yourself with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity," (Col. 4:5), he began the thought in verse 2 by reminding them to pray, keep alert, and be thankful! So often I forget to devote myself to prayer concerning my awareness and opportunities. For what it's worth, I stopped just now while writing this to pray for you concerning this. Please pray for me and for God's people everywhere—that our eyes be opened, and that the Lord send forth workers.

COURAGE:

Most of the things I am afraid of concerning evangelism are selfish and embarrassing to admit. I'm afraid I will no longer be liked, or thought of as unkind, or excluded from activities or conversations, or embarrass myself, or stick my foot in my mouth, or some other thing that is only about me and my comfort. I feel much better about confessing the other things I am afraid of because they genuinely result from my concern for the other person. I worry I will push them away, ruin an opportunity, say something wrong, or not actually help them in some way. Some of these fears are valid, but really only if I fail to get one of two things right. We are to be "speaking the truth in love" (**Eph. 4:15**). If I speak the truth but am not mo-

tivated by love it will do no good for me and could potentially hurt the one I seek to help. If I love but fail to speak the truth, it does no good for them. This pursuit is so freeing to me. I find great courage in this! Just think of the incredible implication—as long as I love them and speak what I know to be true, God is pleased, they can be helped, and I have nothing to be afraid of!

Notice how Scripture gives us courage to speak up. Jesus told a man who knew very little to, "report...what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you" (**Mk. 5:19**). God does not expect, or need for us, to speak of things we don't know! We need not, and should not, speculate, or add to what God has done or said! He can accomplish His purposes with the truth that He has already taught me, even if I have so much more truth to learn. In **Acts 4:20** this same principle is taught. Peter and John said, "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." How encouraging! They were not expected to speak of things they hadn't seen or heard, and neither are we. Look closer at your fears. If you have heard enough truth to gain faith, then what you have heard is enough to help another find faith. As long as we are willing to speak only what we know to be true, and refrain from speaking of things we don't know, we have nothing to fear. And more importantly, God's truth is powerful enough to help another even if we deem it to be small or incomplete.

CRAFT:

God is a craftsman. Children of God should be imitators of their Father. Paul wrote in **Colossians 4:6**, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." Some eaters just stuff their face; others take the time to collect, measure, and season their meal to make it enjoyable. When I was younger, I did everything in haste. As I have matured, I have seen the value in taking my time to prepare and do things with much more thoughtfulness. Why would we not do this when it comes to speaking with others, or serving them on behalf of our Lord? Perhaps, it's because we are lazy. Perhaps, it's because we don't want to think deeply about our shortcomings to know what another might need. Perhaps, we just don't care enough.

I have started to practice some things lately that have helped me communicate more clearly, more kindly, and more effectively. It actually is something I do after encounters, not before. I try to replay the conversation in my mind and honestly critique what I said, how I listened, and what I could have done better. I have also begun to be a more serious student of how Jesus spoke in various situations to different kinds of people. I sure have a lot to learn. But I finally care. I hope you do too.



In Taking Away the Law Did Jesus Take Away All Law?

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

We are hearing a lot lately about how we, living under the dispensation of Christ, are under grace and not under law. The implication being that Jesus died to free us from law – period – not merely the Mosaic law.

Much is made of the fact that, in many translations and manuscripts, the article, the, is not present. Hence the new dispensation is said to be one of grace without rules to be obeyed. It is alleged that our freedom in Christ is freedom for all law – any system containing commandments or rules to be observed.

Also, much is made of **Roman 6:14-15**, where about all translations say that we are not "under law but under grace." The King James Version pretty much stands alone in saying not "under the law." According to various scholars, there are a few places where the King James and maybe some others go with "the law" where "the" is not present in the original. Granting that to be the case, the contexts, both immediate and broader, bear out that the writer had "the law" (of Moses) in mind.

The without law concept destroys both grace and law for this dispensation. Note the following:

Sin is, by biblical definition, transgression of law (or lawlessness). (**1 John 3:4**) – so, where there is no law, there is no sin (**Romans 4:15**).

So, if we are not under law (of any kind), then we have no sin.

Grace is God's answer to sin (See **Romans 5:14-6:2**) – thus, with no sin we have no need for grace.

Hence, we have a dispensation with neither law nor any need for grace.

Let us reference a few other passages that show the New Testament is law of some kind:

Hebrews 10:9 – Jesus came in order take away the first will in order to establish the second. The first will was "the law" (of Moses) according to verse 8. The Old Testament was God's first will or law, while the

The first covenant was the old law. The second covenant was the second law. It is God's law that changed. If I change clothes, I am still wearing clothes. There has been a change of clothes, not a mere shedding of clothes.

New Testament is His second will (or law). His "will" is His law. If I do the will of God I am doing His law.

Hebrews 7:12-14 – With ushering in of the New Testament there was a change of "the law." You see, God is such a stickler for law, that not even His Son could be high priest without a change of law. The first law provided for only Levites being priests. But Jesus was of Judah; a tribe of which the first law said nothing concerning priesthood.

So there was of necessity a change of the law so that Jesus could be a lawful (legal) high priest.

Note the text does not merely say there was a necessity for removing the law, but a change of the law. A law changed is still law. In fact, the whole book of Hebrews is given to convince Jews that the law or covenant had been changed. Whether you view the two systems (Old and New) to be laws, covenants, or wills there are still "rules" to obey. As parties to each covenant there were the terms of the covenant that had to be adhered to. The first covenant had its rules to be obeyed. It was "the law." The second covenant also has its rules to obey. The first covenant was the old law. The second covenant was the second law. It is God's law that changed. If I change clothes, I am still wearing clothes. There has been a change of clothes, not a mere shedding of clothes.

The New Testament speaks of the law under Christ in various ways. It speaks of the "law of Christ" (**Galatians 6:2**); "the law of faith" (**Romans 3:27**); "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (**Romans 8:2**); "law of liberty" (**James 1:25; 2:12**); "the law of God" (**Romans 8:7**); "under the law to Christ" (**1 Corinthians 9:21**).

Do not be deceived. By the grace of God, we are under law to Christ that, according to James, tells us to look into that law in view of continuing in it and doing the works taught therein – and with the view of being judged by it at the end of our journey here on earth.

