

A Light in the Valley

March 2019
Volume 5
Issue 3

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Knowing the Lord

by: Kris Brewer

The idea of “Knowing the Lord” is often discussed in the religious world. The phrase is often used of those who believe they have come into a relationship with God, and of an ongoing relationship with Him. We say we “know the Lord” as a way of saying that we have been saved. This is a phrase that is, in fact, used in scripture. It is also an idea that is expressed, even when not expressly stated. However, as we look at scripture, we can see that it is used in a different way than we often hear around us today.

The idea of “knowing the Lord” does in fact reflect having a relationship with Him. There are at least two places in the book of 1 Samuel that reflect this idea. The first, in a description of the wicked sons of Eli, states:

Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD. (1 Samuel 2:12)

These sons of Eli were serving as

priests of the Lord! They offered the sacrifices to God on His altar. And yet, they were so corrupted and evil, the inspired text says that they “did not know the Lord.” Had you asked these men about their relationship with the Lord, surely they would have said that they “knew the Lord.” After all, how could men who served in such a capacity not know the Lord? If the priests were not among those who had a relationship with the Lord, then who could be? A look at the lives of these men (Hophni and Phinehas) shows that they had completely rejected the instruction of the Lord. They had become selfish in their own service, making their duties as priests about themselves, rather than about their diligent service to the Lord (See 1 Samuel 2:13-17).

The second time we see this idea conveyed is in chapter 3, this time it is used in relation to Samuel. When God began to call Samuel, while he was in the service of Eli, the priest, Samuel did not

know who was speaking to him. As an explanation for why Samuel believed it was Eli calling and did not realize that it was Jehovah, the inspired writer said:

(Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.) (1 Samuel 3:7)

A similar phrase is used of Samuel as was used of Eli's sons, and yet the connotation is completely different. Samuel did not yet know the Lord. He did not yet know the Lord because the word of the Lord had not been revealed to him! If we follow Samuel's story, we see that God was in the process of revealing Himself to Samuel at that time. He would not be like the sons of Eli, rejecting the instruction of the Lord, but rather being obedient to it. So, though he did not yet know the Lord, it would not take long until he did know the Lord. We see through the rest of the life of Samuel that he was diligent about maintaining a relationship with God, by being diligent to follow the instructions that he was given!

From these two examples, we can get a pretty good idea about what it means to "know the Lord." Those who refuse to do what the instructions of God teach, no matter what kind of position they might be in, or how much they talk about knowing the Lord, really do not know Him. They may think they have a relationship with Him, but in fact they do not. Only those who do what the Lord commands can "know Him."

Jesus addressed a very similar idea:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:21-23)

Jesus here addressed the claims of those who declared they had a relationship with Him, but refused to be obedient to Him. They would claim that they did all kinds of wonderful things "in His name," yet they were not the things that He had commanded!

Many who claim to "know the Lord" today are exactly like those in Jesus' condemnation. They want to claim that they are serving Him, yet they refuse to actually do what He has commanded. How often do we hear things such as:

"I know I don't go to church, and I probably should, but at least I know the Lord. That

is what is important!"

"I know I should stop drinking, but I know the Lord, so I'm ok!"

"I realize I should clean up my language, but I know the Lord, and He doesn't care if I'm not perfect!"

"Knowing the Lord" has become an excuse to participate in all manner of ungodliness! Somehow, in the minds of many people, claiming to know the Lord has become a license to sin. When we think back to the example of Hophni and Phinehas, we see that such disobedience actually identifies one who does NOT know the Lord!

Does the Lord know you?

While much attention has been placed on whether or not we "know the Lord," , not nearly the same attention has been given to the question: Does the Lord know you?

In Matthew 7:23, Jesus expressed a most terrifying thought. To those who declared that they knew Him, but refused to be obedient to the things that He declared to them, He said, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" It was not that these people had not done anything. It was not even that they had not done some things that most people would judge to be "good things." The problem was that they had not done "the will of My Father in heaven." Because they had rejected the message that had been delivered, they were not known by Him!

We need to realize that no amount of arguing will make us known by Him. Declaring that we know Him does not force Him to have a relationship with us. What we want, and how we want it, does not impact the criteria that Jesus set down for having a relationship with Him. So, if we are trying to convince ourselves that we "know the Lord" to appease our consciences concerning our own disobedience, we should ask ourselves the more important question: Does the Lord know me? We may deceive ourselves into believing that He must have a relationship with us. But, in the end, we will be just like those He addressed in Matthew 7. We brag about what we are to Him, and He responds with "I never knew you..." How frightening!

The only way for us to come to know the Lord, and for Him to know us, is for us to listen to His revealed word. What He has given means something! To ignore it,

or to rebel against it, shows that we really do not know the Lord, and He does not know us. If we know that the Lord has given instructions and we make excuses to continue in our sinful practices, then we do not know Him, and He does not know us. We cannot pick and choose the things we think are important in His word. He has made it clear that He expects obedience. If we want to have a relationship with Him, then we must submit to Him in obedience. While we are making excuses, we have no relationship with Him!

What Are YOU Looking for in a Church?

by: Steve Hardin

At this very moment, hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans are looking for a church (or, as some express it, a “church home”). They are looking (1) because they have recently moved to a new area, (2) because they had drifted and are now ready for a renewal of religious interest in their lives, or (3) because they have become unhappy with “their old church.” What are they looking for? What are YOU looking for? What do they hope to find? What do they feel they need?

- * Some are looking for a church that is like the former church they belonged to. They don’t want to change from the religion or way of worship that they have become accustomed to.
- * Some are looking for a church (building) that is close to where they live. One that is within easy driving distance. They don’t want to have to go very far to get to “church.”
- * Some are looking for a church made up of friendly people who will make them feel welcome and wanted. Warm feelings and caring hearts are important and a church that is cold and formal has no appeal.
- * Some are looking for a church that will lift their spirits and build up their self-esteem. They want a sense of importance and belonging. They don’t want a church whose members just never seem to accept them.
- * Some are looking for a big church. They prefer to blend in with the crowd. They

don't want a church that is so small they everyone is noticed and everyone is expected to chip in and help out.

* Some are looking for a small church because they don't want to be lost in a crowd. Smaller churches, it is believed, are more friendly and more like a family. They don't want a church that is so big that you don't know who the regulars are and who are the visitors.

* Some are looking for a church that is busy with all kinds of activities in the community. They like family affairs and youth groups. They want some good wholesome activities that young people can be a part of: a softball team, camping, lock-ins, etc., as long as there are several choices for a family to choose from.

Now, if you will, look back, over that list. There is not one word about God, Jesus, the Bible, salvation from sins, strengthening the soul, heaven or eternal life. Churches were established in the first century for the purpose of teaching God's word, saving souls and strengthening the members.

When a group of Christians constitute a church, they do not have to wonder what God wants of them. The lives they are to live, the organizational arrangement they are to have, the doctrine they are to teach, the collective work that they are to do are all clearly defined in the New Testament. With open Bibles we find out what a congregation of God's people is supposed to be, to teach, and to do.

Permit me to offer some suggestions:

* Look for a church that respects the sovereignty of God and the authority of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17).

* Look of a church that respects the Bible as the inspired word of God, and the gospel as the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16)

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

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The Consequences of Being a Liar

by: R.J. Evans

The sin of lying is a serious matter that has eternal consequences. In Revelation 21:8 we are told: “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” The Apostle Paul specifically told Christians to put “away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another” (Eph. 4:25).

I find it interesting that the Apostle John spoke of five different types of liars in the First Epistle of John. Please take note of these types of liars:

1. Those who claim to be in fellowship with God, but are walking in sin. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth” (1 Jn. 1:6). For a good contrast between walking in the light of truth, as opposed to walking in the darkness of sin and error, please read Ephesians 5:6-16.
2. Those who say they have not sinned and have deceived themselves. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us” (1 Jn. 1:8, 10). God has told us that we all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). To claim that we have not sinned is a lie (“the truth is not in us”), and while doing so, we attempt to make God a liar because He has clearly established the fact that we are sinners. “Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4).
3. Those who claim to know God, but do not obey Him. “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:4). To love and know God is to obey His will. Later on in this epistle, John stated: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 Jn. 5:3).
4. Those who claim they love God, but hate their brother in Christ. “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” (1 Jn. 4:20).
5. Those who deny the deity and humanity of Christ—God incarnate—that He

came and lived in the flesh. “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son....and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (1 Jn. 2:22; 4:3).

In view of the seriousness and the eternal consequences of lying, we again emphasize – put “away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another” (Eph. 4:25).

Brief Exhortations...

Compiled by David Riggs

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward; arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” (1 Pet. 3:3-4)

The world puts emphasis on one’s outward appearance. Millions of dollars are spent each year on diet, exercise, clothing, and cosmetics, most of which are designed to improve one’s outward appearance. Many of those things are superficial measures to make people appear more beautiful than they really are. It is empty and vain to beautify only the outward person. Prov. 31:30 says, “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” 1 Sam. 16:7 says, “...The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

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* Look for a church that strives to be like the churches you can read about in the New Testament - in name, in worship, in organization, in teaching and in work (1 Thes. 2:14).

* Look for a church that is concerned about lost souls and eternal destinies (Mt. 28:19-20).

* Look for a church that ministers to the spiritual needs of men. It is the soul of man that will live forever (Eph. 4:11-16).

Daily Bible Reading

April 2019

April 1	Genesis 1-3	April 16	Genesis 28:1-30:24
April 2	Genesis 4-5	April 17	Genesis 30:25-31:55
April 3	Genesis 6:1-8:19	April 18	Genesis 32-33
April 4	Genesis 8:20-10:32	April 19	Genesis 34-35
April 5	Genesis 11-14	April 22	Genesis 36-37
April 8	Genesis 15:1-18:21	April 23	Genesis 38-40
April 9	Genesis 18:22-20:18	April 24	Genesis 41
April 10	Genesis 21-22	April 25	Genesis 42-43
April 11	Genesis 23-24	April 26	Genesis 44-45
April 12	Genesis 25-26	April 29	Genesis 46-47
April 15	Genesis 27	April 30	Genesis 48-50

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