

Living and Learning

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Psalm 78:1-7

1. What we know about the world around us is a cumulative result of the studies and preservation of knowledge going back to the beginning.
2. Much of our own personal Bible knowledge is the result of the studies of others passed on to us in written and verbal form.

B. The children of the world know this.

1. "Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation." (Walter Cronkite)
2. "Only a generation of readers will spawn a generation of writers." (Steven Spielberg)
3. "He who opens a school door, closes a prison." (Victor Hugo)
4. "Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace." (Confucius)

I. DOES AN EDUCATION HAVE VALUE?

- A. Consider the alternative. Solomon did and concluded that wisdom gained by learning is better - Ecc. 2:12-14, 7:11-12, 8:1

II. THE EFFECTS OF IGNORANCE

- A. An ignorant person believes that what he knows is the only and absolute truth. Prov. 28:26, 3:5
1. Alternatives are not considered. Actions are not questioned. Bigotries become realities.
 2. This is particularly dangerous in matters of sound doctrine - 1Cor. 15:34
 3. If they don't know or understand a matter, then it must be "a bad thing"- Jude 10; 2Peter 2:12
- B. The world says, if a person wants to do something, never question it.
1. It is why so many refuse to call sin "sin" - Prov. 14:9, 10:23
 2. The ignorant do not know that they are ignorant - Ecc. 2:14
 3. They are proud of their ignorance - Prov. 21:24; James 4:16
- C. Arguments often begin with narrow-mindedness - Prov. 20:3
- D. The ignorant person lives in the "now" and doesn't consider the consequences of present actions on the future - Prov. 22:3
1. He is oblivious to possibilities beyond his own knowledge.
 2. The naive young man was caught in the prostitute's snare because he did not know the danger - Prov. 7:21-23
- E. The gospel cannot be spread through ignorance - 1Tim. 1:5-7

III. THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

- A. It is foolish to despise instruction - Prov. 1:7-8
1. The Proverbs were written for a reason - Prov. 1:1-4

- B. A knowledge of history gives appreciation for the present and hope for the future - Deut. 4:32-35
 - 1. It is why we study the Old Testament - Rom. 15:4
- C. Knowledge of the past needs to be taught so past errors are not repeated and that righteousness is practiced - 1Cor. 10:6-12
- D. Wisdom gives strength - Prov. 24:5-6
- E. Wisdom is pleasant and offers possibilities and hope - Prov. 24:13-14
- F. Wisdom is a defense and a giver of life - Ecc. 7:11-12

IV. THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE

- A. We cannot learn everything - Ecc. 12:12
 - 1. Some things are beyond the wisest person's grasp - Ecc. 7:23-24
 - 2. God's works are vast and deep - Ecc. 8:16-17
- B. Wisdom alone won't change the human predicament. It is not a cure-all for every issue of life - Ecc. 2:14-16
- C. Earthy knowledge is good in moderation - Ecc. 7:16
 - 1. Some constantly learn, but never apply it to their lives - 2Tim. 3:7
- D. Some do not care about opportunities to learn - Prov. 17:16

V. KNOWLEDGE AND THE FAITH

- A. Some avoid education, fearing that it is opposed to God and faith.
 - 1. Ultimately, all life is in the hands of God - Ecc. 9:1
 - 2. There are many things out of our control - Ecc. 9:11
 - 3. Things come to pass, not because I will, but because God wills.
 - a. James 4:13-15
 - 4. Nevertheless, we put effort into learning and planning - Ecc. 9:10
- B. Education in matters of the faith is not evidence of weak faith.
 - 1. Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, means that we can discern and acquire wisdom - Psalm 111:10
 - 2. Buy truth and hold on to it, means that we are responsible for discerning, acquiring, and holding on to truth - Prov. 23:23
 - 3. Understand God's will, means that we can discern it for ourselves Eph. 5:15-17
 - 4. Work out your salvation, means that we can discern it, reason through it, and apply it - Phil. 2:12
- C. Questioning and educating ourselves is not an attack on the sovereignty and wisdom of God; it is a reflection of having been created in His image and proof that He has given us the power of self-determination.

VI. GOD WANTS US TO USE OUR MINDS

- A. God wants us to work, even though we get our food from Him.
 - 1. 2Thes. 3:10; Matt. 6:11
- B. God wants us to think for ourselves, even though He has given us all we need to know - Deut. 29:29; Isa. 1:18