

A PRIMER ON WHAT YOU BELIEVE (CONVICTIONS) AND WHY

I ASK THE QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE AND WHY DO YOU BELIEVE IT?

Many of us often move through life doing things or saying things that really have little Scriptural basis in our own lives.

Example: Our views on –

- Drinking
- Dancing
- R rated movies
- Abortion
- Taxes
- Politics

We can find ourselves have beliefs and convictions that are based upon opinions and mainstream religious viewpoints. What's missing? These beliefs and convictions, while potentially "on target," are not anchored in God's Word.

We do not want to be said of us what was said by Jesus of the Sadducees?

Matthew 22:29 Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know [or understand] the Scriptures or the power of God.

Without God's Word anchored in our lives, we do not have a solid foundation.

House built on **THE SAND V. THE ROCK**

Matthew 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Our faith is weak and shallow; we have not spiritual staying power

PARABLE OF THE SOWER – Speaks to Spiritual Peril

Matthew 13:3-9 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear."

Matthew 13:18-23 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and

snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. ²²The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. ²³But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE AND WHY DO YOU BELIEVE IT? DO YOU *OWN* ALL THAT YOU SAY YOU BELIEVE?

What are your convictions?

Your convictions dictate what you believe and how you live your life. Let's look at a couple Greek words to understand this better.

<<*ginosko*>> v. <<*epiginosko*>>

Let's explore this idea of your convictions – and the relationship of **what you know** and **how you live your life**.

You must learn and know God's Word. Your faith and beliefs must be based upon God's truth.

There are two basic words for "knowing" in the New Testament.

Compare <<*ginosko*>> - to know (verb), or <<*gnosis*>> - (the word of) knowledge.

Defined as to be taking in knowledge, to come to know, almost a scientific appreciation of fact, "head knowledge" or "book knowledge."

<<*epiginosko*>> - to know (verb), or <<*epignosis*>> - experiential knowledge.

Defined as to observe or fully perceive; sometimes implies a special participation in the object known, and gives greater weight to what is stated; lays stress on participation with the truth.

Examples of each from Scripture:

<<*gnosis*>>

Romans 1:21 For although they knew <<*gnosis*>> God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

1 Cor. 1:5 For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge--

1 Cor. 8:1 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ("knowledge" does not connote action, "love" does)

<<epignosis>>

Philip. 1:9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge <<epignosis>> and depth of insight,

Col. 1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge <<epignosis>> of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Philemon 1:6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding <<epignosis>> of every good thing we have in Christ.

When we think, therefore, of experiential knowledge, we think being active in the appropriation of truth, such that it becomes a part of our lives. This is our goal in the Christian life, to not only have head knowledge (which is important), but to also have that knowledge fully embedded into our hearts through experiencing this knowledge by living it out.

OUR CHALLENGE

Our challenge is, therefore, to know God experientially. How?

In sports, we gain proficiency through the process of combining skills/knowledge & training. The same is true spiritually. We need to:

1. Go into training (requires disciplined effort and a training mindset)
2. Acquire knowledge; All knowledge of God begins in His Word. The best way to do this is through personal Bible study.