

This is episode 1 of our 'By Bread Alone' podcast series, entitled "Knowledge Is Not Enough".

- Today we're looking at knowledge itself. The phrase 'knowledge is power' is widely accepted in today's culture as a generally true. But is knowledge in and of itself enough? We're going to dive in to answer this question.
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Is Knowledge Power?

- Well, it depends on who you ask. Whether the person you're asking understands the power of knowledge or not will ultimately be the determination factor.
- So on one hand, knowledge in and of itself is really arbitrary. It's of no consequence to have knowledge strictly for knowledge sake.
- If I grab a handful of sand and happen to have knowledge of how many sand grains are in my hand at the time, what difference does that make to my reality?
- If I had knowledge of all the Harry Potter books and films, and I happen to be an avid Harry Potter fan, how practically does that 'Harry Potter' knowledge impact my life?
- If I have knowledge of the Hindu religion, and understand how to achieve the state of nirvana, again what relevance does that have in reality?
- However, on the other hand, if I have knowledge that people may exhibit certain tendencies given certain triggers or stimuli, then I have the potential under the right circumstances to control the masses.
- If I have knowledge that children are more susceptible to indoctrination than adults, and I have the ability to seed them in the education system with anti-God rhetoric, then I have the potential to produce an anti-God population.
- So again, the question of 'Is knowledge power' depends on who you ask.
- But the question then becomes, what is Power?
- In short, Truth is the Power
- John 8:32 says
32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- Let's look at some definitions
- Knowledge
 - the fact or state of knowing
 - the body or sum of facts accumulated in the course of time.
- Truth
 - the true or actual state of a matter
 - conformity with fact or reality;
 - verity
- Let's see if we can connect the two definitions.
- Knowledge is the sum of facts accumulated over time, but truth is what connects those facts to reality.
- Truth is what people really want.
- When people say 'knowledge is power', what they're really saying is 'truth is power'.
- So just to reiterate, knowledge in and of itself is really arbitrary; but truth substantiates the knowledge (or gives it substance or meaning).
- As the body is dead without the spirit, so is knowledge dead without truth



So how do we know truth when we see it?

- What is the process of obtaining truth as opposed to being swindled by a lie?
- Well the answer is, truth has a built-in mechanism of verification.
- Basically when you encounter truth, and you live your life, truth naturally confirms itself.
- But it's the lie that has to be maintained, kept-up, looked-after, and managed.
- Did you know the human brain is a rational machine that continuously confirms information it receives against what it already knows empirically to be true. It automatically confirms truth, and detects lies for you.
- So when a liar sets out to lie, what he must do is first build a narrative that the lie can exist in, and then upkeep that narrative to make the lie appear as though it were truth in order to deceive people; or better yet, in order to trick the automatic process of our God-given lie-detecting brain.
- It's the liar who has the real burden, not truth bearers.
- From this perspective, truth is easy. It's the lie that's difficult.
- Another note concerning truth vs lies is, no one has ever, in the history of the world, told a lie without an underlying motive or agenda... from infancy onward.
- It's a proven fact that even babies will for all intents and purposes 'lie' by crying as though they're hungry when all they really want is attention.
- Truth on the other hand cannot possibly have a hidden agenda. It is just our natural state of being.
- One final note is, it is literally impossible to tell a lie without conscious knowledge of the truth. There is always calculation; there is always pre-meditation... with a lie.
- This is the principle behind how polygraph machines, or lie detectors work.
- These machines can detect differences in brain activity when a person is telling the truth versus when they're telling a lie because there's more brain activity going on with the person is calculating than when they are just recalling from memory.
- So again just to reiterate, truth is easy. It's the lie that's difficult.



So what about the Biblical case for Truth in comparison to the Biblical case for knowledge?

- Let's look at a few characteristics of truth we find in the Bible.
- 1. Truth is the person of Jesus Christ (or, by His Hebrew given name, the person of Yeshua Ha Mashiach)
- John 14:6
 - 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
- 2. Truth is the Spoken Word of God
- Matthew 12:34b
 - 34b For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
- And the idea here is, out of the abundance of God's heart, He spoke, and He spoke the Word of Truth
- 3. Truth is Power to bring about change
- John 8:32
 - 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- By contrast, let's look at characteristics we find in the Bible for Knowledge.
- 1. Knowledge is Associated with Death
- Genesis 2:17
 - 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
- 2. Knowledge is Associated with the Law
- Hosea 4:6
 - 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.
- 3. Knowledge is a Schoolmaster to show us where we Sin
- Galatians 3:24
 - 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith
- James 4:17
 - 17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.
- And 4. Knowledge in and of itself is Powerless to bring about change
- Romans 8:3
 - 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
- So according to the Biblical case for knowledge, the only possible benefit you should expect of solely having knowledge of the law is death. In other words, the best that knowledge of the law can do for you is show you where you skewed up; and then exact upon you the wages thereof, which is death.
- You don't get a pat on the back for keeping the law. You don't get an attaboy for keeping the law.
- No one; I repeat no one, besides those who are 100% inextricably perfect can possibly be justified as righteous by keeping the law.
- The word 'Law' relates to the word 'rule',
- The word 'rule' relates to the word ruler, as in a measuring tool based on a standard system of measuring units
- You know, I'm a big fan of the television series 'Law and Order'. There's an episode where the detectives are out interviewing suspects, and one suspect happened to be a stock broker. So in the interview, the stock broker said the following line: "There are two types of people in the world: Standard and Poor."
- And of course this was a clever hint to the Standard and Poors financial institution (as in SnP 500).



- But this is exactly how to see keeping the law. Either you're standard (as in keeping the standard), or you're poor (as in falling below the standard).
- Based on the law, either you're 100% perfect, or you're 100% imperfect.



How does the Traditional Church view Knowledge?

- In my opinion, the traditional church views knowledge in terms of one word - accountability.
- Historically the traditional church employs the idea of 'accountability' as a method of inducing change or reform in a member's actions or behavior.
- Now don't get me wrong: the intentions of the traditional church to bring out the virtues in an individual may indeed be pure, but intentions aren't the problem; the outcome is.
- People don't seem to realize that a side-effect of insisting accountability upon someone causes that someone to, by definition, become self-righteous through their performance.
- Not only that, but it also causes them to ignore the very thing that is actually designed to be the power to produce change in an individual; which is simply TRUTH.
- Accountability in this sense is like a ladder to nowhere. You may work your way up the 'ladder of success' in terms of keeping all the rules, but since your righteousness ultimately is as filthy rags, eventually the ladder is going to lead to nowhere.
- Furthermore, many people make the mistake of looking at their entire lives through the lens of one successful short term instance of being accountable; and thus conclude their entire life to be righteous.
- Now I want this point to be emphasized. It's important to understand that accountability is always local to an instance. Sure you may be successful at being accountable in this one instance, or even a series of instances, but it would be foolish to wager your entire life against that one instance or series of instances, to see whether or not you make it in based on your performance.
- Finally, people who actively make themselves accountable are doing so more than likely under the counsel of others, or perhaps for their own self-interests; rather than out of the love for God.
- Some might say their love for God is implied through their accountability efforts, but the problem often is, when the pressure from the persons holding you accountable diminishes, so will the need for you to maintain that accountability also diminish.

What is God's Way Concerning Knowledge?

- We can find the answer in the garden of Eden.
- Genesis 2:9 says
And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- There were two Trees in the midst of the Garden of Eden.
- One tree was the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which equates to the law, or knowledge of the law.
- The other tree was the Tree of Life, which equates of course to life.
- Both together combine to illustrate the symmetry of Jesus Christ
- The late great christian apologist Ravi Zacharias, quotes the following from Fyodor Dostoevski in his poem 'Fearful Symmetry':
- "You can look into the eyes of a tiger and see majesty. You can look into the eyes of a tiger and be terrified."
- Now, he's talking Jesus...
- "No one was more kind and compassionate towards sinners, yet no one ever spoke such red-hot scorching words about sin."
"There's a meekness and power. There's a gentleness and authority. It's that fearful symmetry".
- When we examine the two trees in the garden, we see them indicating a dichotomy; that is, the co-existence of two opposite extremes.



- The two trees here reveal the polarizing nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Rev 3:15-16 says
15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot.
16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.
- Jesus was both hot and cold: Extremely compassionate to sinners, and yet extremely intolerant to sin.
- "It doesn't think it takes 'all that'". You don't have to be all that compassionate. You can be just a little tolerant to sin.
- So again, the two trees of the garden combining as one is an illustration of the symmetry of Jesus Christ.
- But they are also a revelation of something more.
- John 14:6
6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
- So the two trees in the midst of the garden - Life, and Knowledge of good and evil, show that Jesus is the essence of both, bridging the two together through truth
- Now imagine truth as a bridge when I say it this time: He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- The Way is described in Psalm 119:1 as the Law of the Lord
- The Life is described in John 1:4 as the Word, which of course refers to Jesus Christ
- And the Truth bridges to the together and the very foundation of creation is built upon it.



Finally, let's look at the Prodigal Son Parable story of Luke 15

- The prodigal son story is a beautiful summary illustrating truth vs. knowledge of the law, in terms of son-ship vs. servanthood
- John 8:35
And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.
- On his way back home, after sore displeasing his Father, the prodigal son's intention was to assume the role of a servant as a form of repentance, and to appease his Father by works of servitude
- However, the Father acted in a way that was unexpected.
- He treated him as a son, not a servant
- The Father's rejection the prodigal son's overture towards servitude, and His celebration of His son's return illustrates one very important concept:
- Our goal shouldn't be works of lowliness to gain favor, it should only be the enrichment of relationship between Father and son.
- The elder brother, however, was an interesting character in this parable, and brings up something very important.
- He was notably indignant towards his brothers reception
- The elder brother associated deserving a celebratory feast to the ability to keep his Father's commandments; to which he boasted in not transgressing for his whole life but still getting no celebration by way of a feast.
- Unbeknownst to the elder brother, there are no 'brownie points' for keeping the law. The only thing you can rightfully expect from attempting to keep the law is knowledge of your sin when you fail.
- A key here that many people overlook is, the elder brother had taken on the role of a servant, and abandoned his role of being a son.
- Remember in the story, the elder brother was in the field with the servants when the prodigal son returned. This is interesting because he's a son. Why wasn't he in the palace with his father enjoying the privileges of son-ship?
- Being a servant, perhaps he found an attraction towards proving himself through performance, climbing that ladder of vain recognition and prestige.
- But the climax of this entire parable is the Father's regal response to a disrespectful obnoxious elder son's accusation
- The Father entreated his elder son, instead of scolding him
- He gave him the dignity he deserved as a son, not the degradation he earned as though being a servant
- If you're a pastor and you've ever felt the need to resort to tactics centered around rewarding performance in religious servitude, and punishing unfavorable behavior in your members through open disparagement, ask yourself why.
- A final note is that the Father guaranteed his elder son that all He had already belonged to him through inheritance.
- So again, servitude vs. son-ship.
- Whereas a servant understandably attempts to gain something from the Father through performance, sons already have what belongs to their Father through inheritance.
- Keeping the commandments to a son is a matter of love, not performance, and knowledge of the law should be seen through the lens of love, not through the lens of performance.

