

KNOWLEDGE

I enjoy Reader's Digest, but not as much as I once did, because of all of the advertising. However, several years ago I read an article in Reader's Digest where the author was advocating getting rid of Calculators in classes at public school, a sentiment with which I whole heartedly agreed. However, that is not the point of this article. In this article the author made a statement that made me stop and think. He said: "It comes down to this: Knowledge you can look up is knowledge you don't have." And in today's world with ready access to the internet, we do look up a lot of "stuff". However, I thought about this statement this author made and decided it had a spiritual application. Years ago when I was in school I was told, in words to this effect, "the secret to knowledge is knowing where to find the answer," and maybe to some degree this is correct. Yet, as I thought about the above statement quoted from the article in Reader's Digest it occurred to me that in order to talk effectively to people about the Bible it is much better to know what the Bible says about a particular subject than to have to say "let me go look that up".

I remember when I was just a teenager my dad telling about Bible discussions that he had with a man where he worked. On their lunch break they would sit together and discuss the Bible. The man would ask my dad questions about various subjects and dad would give him scripture references to write down so he could read them for himself when he got home. Yes, as I recall, there were some passages my dad had to look up himself before he could tell his friend where to read the answers to his questions, but most of the scriptures he knew book, chapter and verse. This study continued (I can't remember how long but it was more than a few months, as I recall) until this man had been taught the truth and he obeyed the gospel. Now, can you see this was much more effective than if, with every question, dad had said to the man, "let me look that up and see what the Bible says about it and I will get back to you later with the scripture references"?

No, I am not saying that we must be able to have total recall and be able to give book chapter and verse in answer to every question without having to do some research. We, in fact, from time to time need to do some "research" (probably more than we do). However, what I am saying is that we should have a good working knowledge of the Bible and what it teaches that will enable us to at least tell people what the Bible says about salvation, what the church is and how to be a member of it. We also need to be able to explain regarding the work and worship of the Lord's church, because there is much misunderstanding about that even among those who are supposed to be brethren. Remember Jesus said "Ye shall KNOW the truth and the truth shall make you free." Jhn 8:32 and Hosea 4:6 says: "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge." Yes, we need to be able to use a concordance and a good Bible dictionary in order to look things up. We can also use good commentaries (with caution). Those with computers can now use Bible software to good advantage in their studies of God's word. However, all of this should simply be an effort to store up in our hearts the principles we glean from God's word as well as a knowledge of where these principles are found in the Bible.

You see, we desperately need to have a personal knowledge of what the Bible says so that we can share it with our friends and acquaintances and enable us to resist the devil (Jas 4:7) as our Lord was able to do in Matt 4:1-11. David, in Psa 119:11 said: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

(JLH)