

HOW
DO
YOU
KNOW



MARK & PATTI VIRKLER

How Do You Know?

by
Mark Virkler Ph.D. and Patti Virkler D.Min.

This manual is the result of the united efforts of both authors. The concepts and ideas are a culmination of cooperative study and revelation. The experiences described are common to both. The pronoun “I” is used to demonstrate the unity of our thoughts.

Verses are from the KJV Bible unless otherwise noted.

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Preface

Dr. Mark Virkler's *How Do You Know?* will give you a divine double-take. This book challenges from a biblical standpoint our current assumptions about learning, study, and education in Christian seminaries, colleges, and universities.

I love rigorous, disciplined study. I was trained to be a scholar at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, where I completed my undergraduate degree in 1983 and at the University of Chicago, where I completed my Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in 1990. I have been a seminary professor for over five years. I cannot be accused of being uneducated and critical of what I do not know. But the rationalism found in most undergraduate and graduate classrooms at *CHRISTIAN* seminaries, colleges, and universities is radically opposed to biblical patterns of learning and knowing.

Scripture teaches nothing less than the Spirit-anointed epistemology outlined by Dr. Virkler in this book. Rationalism must be replaced by revelation-based knowledge and study that comes from encountering God's Spirit and letting Him guide our pursuit of knowledge. How can our seminaries and colleges have neglected to train the heart to hear God's voice and so focused on training only the mind of future Christian leaders? No wonder we see graduates with skilled minds but corrupt hearts, or at best, hearts devoid of faith and the life of God.

God created our minds to function under the guidance of His Spirit, the Spirit of truth. The disciplines of critical thinking, careful reasoning, and systematic assessment of evidence were all meant to operate only in conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit. True understanding, knowledge, and skill come from the Spirit of God alone. The day Adam and Eve decided to exercise these disciplines apart from God, they started dying.

We must do away with teaching Christian leaders to reason apart from God — the sin of the Garden and the sin of the Pharisees (John 5:37-39) — and we must teach them to eat of the Tree of Life — to reason with a conscious dependence on God's Spirit speaking to them and leading them into all truth (John 16:13-15). I agree with Dr. Virkler completely (Chp. 16 "spirit," p. 10): "Our classes must be reverent, worshipful, heart experiences where the presence of God is invited, honored, and worshiped. Without that, all we have is head knowledge, natural knowledge, and religion. This is all clearly taught with thousands of verses of Scripture. Let him who has ears, hear, and let his classes be spiritual encounters with the living God."

Dr. Gary S. Greig
Educational Advisor
The Apostolic Council for Educational
Accountability
Wagner Institute for Practical Ministry

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Introduction

How I Have Known

LIFE WITHOUT A BIBLICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

In my early life, I never reflected upon the epistemology (i.e. system for knowing) that I used. I hadn't even heard the word "epistemology." It never crossed my mind to ponder the **method** I used for "knowing" something. I just knew. And I have always been quite sure that what I knew at any particular time was the absolute truth. I was so convinced about that that I would consider anyone who held a different point of view as being wrong, and I would generally try to convince them of my correct position on the issue at hand.

As I reflect back, it becomes clear to me that I have used several methods for "knowing" during my life. Most of them were based on who I honored as an authority at that time.

The first method I used was the exploration of the world around me with my five senses. As I discovered the world, I drew conclusions concerning it.

My second method was probably, "If Dad or Mom say something is true, then it is true."

Next I believed, "If my school teacher says it is true, then it is."

After I became a Christian, my approach was, "If my study of the Bible convinces me of a particular position, then that is true."

Finally, in Bible college, my belief was, "If my Bible school teacher says it is true, then it must be true."

At some points in my life I have held such philosophies of knowing as, "If my doctor says it is so, then it is so," and "If the government or the majority says it is so, then it is so," and if science *proved* it was so, then it was true.

So I have held many varied epistemologies throughout my life, and during all this time it never occurred to me that perhaps I should do a thorough

examination of Scriptures to see what they teach about how one knows.

CAN THE WRONG THEORY OF KNOWING CAUSE SHIPWRECK?

Once you ask the question, the answer becomes obvious. Yes! If my foundations for knowing are faulty, then my conclusions will be faulty and I will be living in error rather than in truth.

We have thousands of denominations all seeking truth, using different philosophies for determining truth and arriving at fairly different conclusions.

We have medical researchers who have spent \$27 billion over a period of 27 years seeking a cure for cancer, and yet the incidence of cancer is now 18% higher than before they invested their \$27 billion in research. Is their theory for knowing flawed? Has this wrong epistemology cost us millions of lives and much needless pain and suffering in the United States? If doctors used a more biblical approach to knowing, would they have the solution to cancer?

Medical researchers currently use a ten-year process which involves careful scientific experiments and a \$200 million price tag to bring a new drug to market to prevent a disease. Does this process follow biblical principles concerning how one is to know and discover truth?

Philosophers argue about how one knows. There are many beliefs currently in fashion concerning how to discover truth, ranging from humanism, to mysticism, to pragmatism, to rationalism, to hedonism, to empiricism, to you name it. Which is correct? Do several of them have pieces of the puzzle? Or are all philosophical approaches to discovering truth wrong?

For about 500 years, science has said that we know by using the scientific method and applying it to the outer world, analyzing the results with the use of sense knowledge. However, science added a whole new dimension to its approach to knowing

in 1979 when it accepted parapsychology into its ranks. They have essentially reversed themselves and said in effect, “We now believe there is knowledge beyond the five senses and we have begun to explore it.”

WHY SUCH A LONG BOOK?

Because the theories of knowledge being used in the western world are so unbiblical, it is going to take a considerable amount of effort to remove them and replace them with a biblical way of knowing.

For those who can handle it, this book is as simple as the following statements:

KNOWLEDGE COMES BY RECEIVING THE REVELATION OF GOD IN OUR HEARTS.

MATURITY COMES THROUGH LIVING IT OUT ON THE ANVLS OF LIFE.

That’s the simple condensation of this book. However, for those not accustomed to acquiring knowledge through their spiritual senses, this book provides a detailed process to bring you intellectually to the revelation of one’s need to learn this way. We have also written several books which will bring a person experimentally to a place of sensing their spirits. These are *Dialogue with God*, *How to Hear God’s Voice* and *How to Walk by the Spirit*.

WHERE THIS BOOK WILL TAKE US

You could go straight to the summaries in Chapters Twenty-six and Twenty-seven and assume that in reading them you would know what the book is about. However, what you will really have is a summary of the things God has so far revealed to me. It is unlikely that you will have received the same revelations, but will instead simply be reading words. How exactly is a revelation passed on from one to another? How does the living truth within me become living truth within you? I doubt it happens by reading a summary of what God has shown me. It must come by God showing you revelation in your own heart. The design of this book is such as to cause that to happen in your heart. By studying through the book chapter by chapter and doing the exercises as they are assigned, I believe it is possible for this truth to live within you as well.

If Jesus doesn’t explain Scripture to us, our hearts don’t “get it” (Lk. 24:32). If our hearts don’t get it, then Scripture seems to be only endless laws and theology, which is a trait of phariseeism. Therefore, I recommend that you process through all the chapters and all the exercises in each chapter, praying for a spirit of revelation as you study (Eph. 1:17,18).

Obviously, as a Christian, the Bible should be the first place I look to answer any question. Unfortunately, I find that many times I have not consulted Scripture before making up my mind on a topic.

In this book, we are going to examine as many Scriptures as we can find which might bear on the topic of what the Bible teaches about “how one knows.” I meditated on 5,500 verses in preparation for this book. Although I will not take you through all these verses, I will guide you through a few thousand so you will see what the Bible teaches us concerning approaches we are to use in discovering truth.

Obviously, truth is an integrated whole. In this book, we are examining many individual words which all bear on various aspects of truth. We will be putting together a Christian epistemology piece by piece. Ultimately, we will integrate the various pieces and ask God to give us an overall understanding of knowledge and truth from His perspective.

We will discover if there is more than one kind of knowledge, and if so, what the different kinds of knowledge are and how each kind of knowledge is arrived at.

We will compare a biblical epistemology to that used by various philosophers, as well as the epistemology used by science, medical researchers, politicians, and others.

Finally, we will consider what effect a biblical epistemology will have on our way of living, of making decisions, of teaching, of preaching, of interpreting Scriptures, and of leading small groups within the church.

HOW TO RECEIVE REVELATION KNOWLEDGE AS YOU COMPLETE THE EXERCISES IN THIS BOOK

An example of revelation knowledge is when you are reading the Bible and a verse leaps off the page, hits you between the eyes, and God says, “This is for you right now.” These are precious experiences for the believer. However, for many, they do not happen often enough. There are seven things I do which allow me the privilege of receiving revelation knowledge every time I read the Bible. Truth and insights leap off the page and an understanding of how they are to adjust my life permeates my spirit and soul. I love this experience and hunger for it every time I read the Scriptures. That is why I prepare myself by doing the following seven things. Prayerfully reflect on these steps and determine which ones you do and don’t use. Make sure you use all of them as you complete the exercises in this book, as well as during your regular devotional times.

7:6), and confess any sin in your life, so you are not cut off from ongoing revelation (Is. 59:1,2; I Jn. 1:9).

2. LORD, GRANT ME A TEACHABLE ATTITUDE: Revelation is given to those who maintain an attitude of humility, and it is withheld from the proud and the arrogant. So keep an open, humble attitude before God, allowing Him the freedom to shed greater light on any ideas you currently hold and to alter them as He sees fit (Jas. 4:6; II Pet. 1:19).

3. LORD, I WILL NOT USE MY FACULTIES MYSELF: You can do nothing of your own initiative but only what you hear and see by the Spirit (Jn. 5:19,20,30). You do not have a mind to use, but a mind to present to God so He can use it and fill it with anointed reason and divine vision (Prov. 3:5-7; Rom. 12:1,2). If you use your mind yourself, it is a dead work (Heb. 6:1,2).

Biblical Meditation

**RESULTING IN ILLUMINATION,
REVELATION KNOWLEDGE, ANOINTED REASONING**

<p>Do Not Do This: LEFT-BRAIN STUDY/RATIONAL HUMANISM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have unconfessed sin 2. Have a pre-conceived attitude 3. Be independent: “I can...” 4. Read quickly 5. Rely on reason and analysis only 6. Read without specific purpose 7. Take credit for insights 	<p>BUT DO THIS: WHOLE-BRAIN/HEART MEDITATION/DIVINE REVELATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be washed by Jesus’ blood 2. Have a teachable attitude 3. Pray: “Lord, show me” 4. Slow down, ponder, muse 5. Combine anointed reason, flowing pictures, music & speech 6. Read with focused purpose 7. Glorify God for insights
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4. LORD, I PRAY THAT THE EYES OF MY HEART MIGHT BE ENLIGHTENED: Slow down as you read, mulling the text over and over in your heart and mind, praying constantly for God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him (Eph. 1:17,18; Ps. 119:18).

5. LORD, I PRESENT THE ABILITIES TO REASON AND TO IMAGINE TO YOU TO FILL AND FLOW THROUGH BY YOUR SPIRIT: Meditation involves presenting your faculties to God for Him to fill and use. These include your left-brain reasoning capacities as well as your right-brain visual capacities. Look for the river of God (i.e. “Spirit flow”) to guide and fill

both hemispheres, granting you anointed reasoning and dream and vision (Jn. 7:37-39). Music can assist you, as can muttering, speaking, and writing as you go through the discovery process (II Kings 3:15).

6. LORD, SHOW ME THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM I AM FACING: Focused attention brings additional

THE SEVEN STEPS OF BIBLICAL MEDITATION EXPLAINED:

1. LORD, CLEANSE ME BY YOUR BLOOD: Since receiving divine revelation is at the heart of biblical meditation, you must prepare yourself to receive from the Holy Spirit by repenting and being cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. You must be obedient to previous revelations from God (Matt.

energies of concentration of heart and mind, which help release revelation. For example, note the difference between a ray of sunlight hitting a piece of paper, and sunlight going through a magnifying glass to hit a piece of paper. The focused energy creates a ray so concentrated that the paper bursts into flames. When you have a hunger to master a new understanding and discipline, that hungry and searching heart will cause you to see things you would not normally see (Matt. 5:6).

7. THANK YOU, LORD, FOR WHAT YOU HAVE SHOWN ME: Realizing that the revelation came from the indwelling Holy Spirit, give all the glory to God for what has been revealed (Eph. 3:21).

ANOTHER GREAT AID TO "SEEING": WRITING OUT SCRIPTURE

When you write or type out a verse, you discover words which you otherwise might have missed. Therefore, I write out verses which I know are key truths for my life. I pray over them, diagram them, analyze them, meditate on them. That is why I have written many of my books. I write so I can learn, so I can put truths I am understanding in my own words and in a framework which is meaningful for me.

The following is the law which God gave for new kings who had just been crowned and were coming to sit upon their throne for the first time:

"Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests" (Deut. 17:18).

Since we are kings and priests, are we to do any less (I Pet 2:9)? Let us make the writing out of Scriptures an important part of our lives.

LAMAD STANDARDS FOR SPIRIT-ANOINTED SMALL GROUP SHARING (CLASSROOM METHODOLOGY)

Following are some recommendations for increasing the anointing which is present during a small group study of this (or any) course.

1. BEGIN BY BUILDING SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY THROUGH A TIME OF PRAISE, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER, WELCOMING THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE TEACHER. You may use either an anointed worship leader or an anointed cassette or CD. As a group, enter God's presence in praise and worship, and conclude the worship time with a prayer for the Holy Spirit to grant revelation knowledge among the students during your time together (Eph. 1:17,18). Never grieve the Holy Spirit by not honoring and welcoming Him as your Teacher.

2. SINCE PERSONAL GROWTH IS OFTEN DIFFICULT, BUILD EMOTIONAL OPENNESS AND INTIMACY WITH A HUG BREAK. Have a short time of mingling and sharing hugs one with another. This touching breaks down walls, and builds intimacy among the group, allowing the members to share more deeply during the guided self-discovery discussion time which will follow.

3. CAPTURE EVERYONE'S HEART AND ATTENTION WITH A STORY. The group leader should introduce the discussion by painting a picture of a real-life situation which involves the topic being explored in that meeting, and relating it meaningfully to the group, showing that either a right or a wrong understanding and application of the topic at hand will have a significant effect on each individual's life (Matt. 13:34). In this book, you will find a story suitable for sharing at the beginning of each chapter. Begin the sharing by reading this story, and then having group members share their memory verses, insights, answers to the discussion questions, and written weekly summaries.

4. SET THE PACE BY MODELING OPEN, HONEST SHARING. The leader may choose to share an anointed insight God gave him through the week's assignment and how this met a real-life need or dilemma he was facing. The group will not share their lives any more deeply than the leader shares his.

5. INVOLVE ALL GROUP MEMBERS IN A SHARING OF REVELATIONS. Go around the group and have members read verses on which God gave them revelation insight. Have them share what God has spoken to them from these verses and what practical difference it makes in their lives. Draw out the timid students by calling on them to share, and limit the naturally talkative.

6. HAVE AN ANOINTED TEACHING ELEMENT AND/OR FILLER EXERCISE IN CASE DISCUSSION LAGS. The anointed teaching should be something God has freshly revealed to the teacher concerning either the lesson completed for this class or the one assigned for the coming week, and which he senses will be meaningful and relevant to the lives of the students. This can come early in the group meeting. The filler exercise is something which would be interesting and beneficial to the students but which won't be tragic if it is missed. This can come nearer the end of the meeting.

7. CLOSE WITH A TIME OF JOURNALING* AND/OR MINISTRY, WHERE YOU PRACTICE AND APPLY THE TRUTH IN THE CLASSROOM. This allows students a chance to record directly from God what He wants to speak to them, and to receive prayer and the laying on of hands by the group to meet their individual needs. End with a prayer of thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit for His presence during the meeting.

*JOURNALING

Journaling is the writing out of your personal dialogue with God. It is one of four keys to recognizing the Lord's voice within your heart which is taught in *Dialogue with God* and *How to Hear God's Voice* by Mark and Patti Virkler. Following is a summary of the teaching of these books. Use these four keys when you come to the journaling exercises at the end of each chapter of this book.

FOUR KEYS TO HEARING GOD'S VOICE

The age in which we live is so married to rationalism and cognitive, analytical thought that we almost mock when we hear of one actually claiming to be able to hear the voice of God. However, we do not scoff, for several reasons. First, men and women throughout the Bible heard God's voice. Also, there are some highly effective and reputable men and women of God alive today who demonstrate that they hear God's voice. Finally, there is a deep hunger within us all to commune with God, and hear Him speak within our hearts.

As a born-again, Bible-believing Christian, I struggled unsuccessfully for years to hear God's voice. I prayed, fasted, studied my Bible and listened for a voice within, all to no avail. **There was no inner**

voice that I could hear! Then God set me aside for a year to study, read, and experiment in the area of learning to hear God's voice. During that time, God taught me **four keys that opened the door to two-way prayer.** I have discovered that not only do they work for me, but they have worked for many thousands of believers who have been taught to use them, bringing tremendous intimacy to their Christian experience and transforming their very way of living. This will happen to you also as you seek God, utilizing the following four keys. They are all found in Habakkuk 2:1,2. I encourage you to read this passage before going on.

KEY #1 - God's voice in our hearts sounds like a flow of spontaneous thoughts. Therefore, when I tune to God, I tune to spontaneity.

The Bible says that the Lord answered me and said...(Hab. 2:2). Habakkuk knew the sound of God's voice. Elijah described it as a still, small voice. I had always listened for an inner **audible** voice, and surely God can and does speak that way at times. However, I have found that for most of us, most of the time, God's inner voice comes to us as **spontaneous thoughts, visions, feelings, or impressions.** For example, haven't each of us had the experience of driving down the road and having **a thought come to us** to pray for a certain person? We generally acknowledge this to be the voice of God calling to pray for that individual. My question to you is, "What did God's voice sound like as you drove in your car? Was it an inner, audible voice, or was it a spontaneous thought that lit upon your mind?" Most of you would say that God's voice came to you as a spontaneous thought.

So I thought to myself, "Maybe when I listen for God's voice, I should be listening for a flow of spontaneous thoughts. Maybe spirit-level communication is received as spontaneous thoughts, impressions, feelings, and visions." Through experimentation and feedback from thousands of others, I am now convinced that this is so.

The Bible confirms this in many ways. The definition of *paga*, the Hebrew word for intercession, is "a chance encounter or an accidental intersecting." When God lays people on our hearts for intercession, He does it through *paga*, a chance

encounter thought, accidentally intersecting our thought processes. Therefore, when I tune to God, I tune to chance encounter thoughts or spontaneous thoughts. When I am poised quietly before God in prayer, I have found that the flow of spontaneous thoughts that comes is quite definitely from God.

KEY #2 - I must learn to still my own thoughts and emotions, so that I can sense God's flow of thoughts and emotions within me. Habakkuk said, "I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart..." (Hab. 2:1). Habakkuk knew that in order to hear God's quiet, inner, spontaneous thoughts, he had to first go to a quiet place and still his own thoughts and emotions. Psalm 46:10 encourages us to be still, and know that He is God. There is a deep inner knowing (spontaneous flow) in our spirit that each of us can experience when we quiet our flesh and our minds.

I have found several simple ways to quiet myself so that I can more readily pick up God's spontaneous flow. Loving God through a quiet worship song is a most effective means for me (note II Kings 3:15). It is as I become still (thoughts, will, and emotions) and am poised before God that the divine flow is realized. Therefore, after I worship quietly and then become still, I open myself for that spontaneous flow. If thoughts come to me of things I have forgotten to do, I write them down and then dismiss them. If thoughts of guilt or unworthiness come to my mind, I repent thoroughly, receive the washing of the blood of the Lamb, and put on His robe of righteousness, seeing myself spotless before the presence of God.

As I fix my gaze upon Jesus (Heb. 12:2), becoming quiet in His presence, and sharing with Him what is on my heart, I find that two-way dialogue begins to flow. Spontaneous thoughts flow from the throne of God to me, and I find that I am actually conversing with the King of Kings.

It is very important that you become still and properly focused if you are going to receive the pure word of God. If you are not still, you will simply be receiving your own thoughts. If you are not properly focused on Jesus, you will receive an impure flow, because the intuitive flow comes out of that upon which you have fixed your eyes. Therefore,

if you fix your eyes upon Jesus, the intuitive flow comes from Jesus. If you fix your gaze upon some desire of your heart, the intuitive flow comes out of that desire of your heart. To have a pure flow you must first of all become still, and secondly, you must carefully fix your eyes upon Jesus. Again I will say, this is quite easily accomplished by quietly worshipping the King, and then receiving out of the stillness that follows.

KEY #3 - As I pray, I fix the eyes of my heart upon Jesus, seeing in the spirit the dreams and visions of Almighty God.

We have already alluded to this principle in the previous paragraphs; however, we need to develop it a bit further. Habakkuk said, "I will keep watch to see," and God said, "Record the vision" (Hab. 2:1,2). It is very interesting that Habakkuk was going to actually start looking for vision as he prayed. He was going to open the eyes of his heart, and look into the spirit world to see what God wanted to show him. This is an intriguing idea.

I had never thought of opening the eyes of my heart and looking for vision. However, the more I thought of it, the more I realized this was exactly what God intends me to do. He gave me eyes in my heart. They are to be used to see in the spirit world the vision and movement of Almighty God. I believe there is an active spirit world functioning all around me. This world is full of angels, demons, the Holy Spirit, the omnipresent God, and His omnipresent Son, Jesus. There is no reason for me not to see it, other than my rational culture, which tells me not to believe it is even there and provides no instructions on how to become open to seeing this spirit world.

The most obvious prerequisite to seeing is that we need to look. Daniel was seeing a vision in his mind and he said, "I was looking...I kept looking...I kept looking" (Dan. 7:1,9,13). Now as I pray, I look for Jesus present with me, and I watch Him as He speaks to me, doing and saying the things that are on His heart. Many Christians will find that if they will only look, they will see. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. It is as simple as that. You will see a spontaneous inner vision in a manner similar to receiving spontaneous inner thoughts. You can see

Christ present with you in a comfortable setting, because Christ is present with you in a comfortable setting. Actually, you will probably discover that inner vision comes so easily you will have a tendency to reject it, thinking that it is just you. (Doubt is Satan's most effective weapon against the Church.) However, if you will persist in recording these visions, your doubt will soon be overcome by faith as you recognize that the content of them could only be birthed in Almighty God.

God continually revealed Himself to His covenant people using dream and vision. He did so from Genesis to Revelation and said that, since the Holy Spirit was poured out in Acts 2, we should expect to receive a continuing flow of dreams and visions (Acts 2:1-4). Jesus, our perfect example, demonstrated this ability of living out of ongoing contact with Almighty God. He said that He did nothing on His own initiative, but only that which he **saw the Father doing, and heard the Father saying** (Jn. 5:19,20,30). What an incredible way to live!

Is it actually possible for us to live out of the divine initiative as Jesus did? A major purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection was that the veil be torn from top to bottom, giving us access into the immediate presence of God, and we are commanded to draw near (Heb. 10:19-22). Therefore, even though what I am describing seems a bit unusual to a rational twentieth century culture, it is demonstrated and described as being a central biblical teaching and experience. It is time to restore to the Church all that belongs to the Church.

Because of their intensely rational nature and existence in an overly rational culture, some will need more assistance and understanding of these truths before they can move into them. They will find this help in the book *How to Hear God's Voice* by the same author.

KEY #4 - Journaling, the writing out of our prayers and God's answers, provides a great new freedom in hearing God's voice.

God told Habakkuk to record the vision and inscribe it on tablets...(Hab. 2:2). It had never crossed my mind to write out my prayers and God's answers as Habakkuk did at God's command. If you begin to search Scripture for this idea, you will find hundreds of chapters demonstrating it (Psalms, many of the prophets, Revelation). Why then hadn't I ever thought of it?

I called the process "journaling," and I began experimenting with it. I discovered it to be a fabulous facilitator to clearly discerning God's inner, spontaneous flow, because as I journaled I was able **to write in faith for long periods of time**, simply believing it was God. I did not have to test it as I was receiving it, (which jams one's receiver), because I knew that when the flow was over I could go back and test and examine it carefully, making sure that it lined up with Scripture.

You will be amazed when you attempt journaling. Doubt may hinder you at first, but throw it off, reminding yourself that it is a biblical concept, and that God is present, speaking to His children. Don't take yourself too seriously. When you do, you become tense and get in the way of the Holy Spirit's movement. It is when we cease **our labors** and enter His rest that God is free to flow (Heb. 4:10). Therefore, put a smile on your face, sit back comfortably, get out your pen and paper, and turn your attention toward God in praise and worship, seeking His face. As you write out your question to God and become still, fixing your gaze on Jesus, who is present with you, you will suddenly have a very good thought in response to your question. Don't doubt it, simply write it down. Later, as you read your journaling, you, too, will be amazed to discover that you are indeed dialoguing with God.

Some final notes. No one should practice this without having first read through at least the New Testament (preferably, the entire Bible), and being submitted to solid, spiritual leadership. All major directional moves that come through journaling should be submitted before being acted upon.

Foundation Stone #1

THE GOAL OF KNOWING

“To know God’s thoughts through the Spirit”

Chapter One

“Truth” Biblically Speaking

This chapter is drawn from the 235 verses in the King James Version of the Bible which have the word “truth” in them.

THE STORY

I have often argued over “truth” with other Christians. They have verses which back up their position. I have verses which back up my position. They quote their verses; I quote mine. I try to change their minds; they try to change my mind. We argue back and forth. Sometimes we become angry and hostile toward one another. I assume I am right. They, of course, assume they are right. I assume that whoever can think and reason most clearly holds the correct position on the point being argued. I challenge their thinking processes and their underlying presuppositions. In frustration, we part. They have their truth. I have my truth. God has His truth, which, of course, we both believe we have. Something is definitely wrong. What is truth, anyway?

GREEK VERSUS HEBREW KNOWING: DETACHED KNOWLEDGE VERSUS PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

In our culture, we tend to think of knowing as simply “acquiring detached knowledge.” When the Bible speaks of knowing, it speaks much more in terms of “personal encounter” than of simply “detached knowledge.” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. II* by Colin Brown deals with this distinction for several pages under its treatment of the word “knowledge” (*ginosko* - pages 390-406). In summary, it states that “While the Greeks were concerned with detached knowledge and a speculative interest in the metaphysical nature of things, the Old Testament regards knowledge as something which continually arises from personal encounter. When the Old Testament makes statements about God and creation, we should not regard them as ontological deductions, but as declarations of faith in response to God’s revelation.” (page 396)

Therefore we need to be aware that, while for the Greeks and the rational Westerner, knowledge may

be simply detached and logical, for the Hebrew and the Christian, knowledge is much more than that. It is spiritual revelation from God and a personal encounter with truth. It demands participation, involvement, and responsiveness. It is life-changing.

YADA AND GINOSKO - BIBLICAL WORDS FOR KNOWING

The idea of an intimate relationship with truth is powerfully conveyed by the two primary words for “know” in the Bible, *yada* in the Hebrew language, and *ginosko* in the Greek. These two words are counterparts of each other, and are used extensively throughout the Old and New Testaments. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), *ginosko* is used as the Greek translation of *yada*. Both of these words are used to describe the intimacy of a love relationship between a man and his wife. Thus, they are words that go beyond simple objective knowledge to an intimacy and a personal acquaintance with that which you know. The senses may contribute to *ginosko* knowledge, however it goes much deeper. It involves a spiritual understanding, a comprehension of what your senses are perceiving.

WHAT OR WHO IS TRUTH?

Obviously, an earnest Christian desires to know “truth.”

Pilate asked the question any Greek, or any contemporary Westerner, might ask: “*What* is truth?” (Jn. 18:37,38). Jesus did not answer him, perhaps because truth is not a “what.” It is not a pile of information which can be held and examined as putty in one’s hands.

Jesus had already answered Pilate’s question earlier when He said, “*I Am*...the truth” (Jn. 14:6). Truth was embodied in a Person. Perhaps it could more accurately be stated that truth is embodied in the Spirit which indwells that Person, for Jesus called the indwelling Holy Spirit “the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:16,17). Jesus said that this indwelling Holy Spirit would “guide us into all truth” (Jn. 16:13),

that His anointing would teach us all things, and is true and is no lie (I Jn. 2:27).

Jesus said that His life actually bore witness unto the truth, and that everyone that is of the truth would hear His voice (Jn. 18:37).

The above verses clearly teach that truth is something which arises out of the voice of the Spirit (Jesus) within. Truth is not so much a “head thing” as it is a “heart thing.” It is arrived at through a subjective inner experience, which may be related to an external experience which precipitates the revelation of truth within the heart and life of the individual.

An example of an external catalyst which may precipitate the discovery of truth is the Holy Scriptures. “Thy word is true,” declared the Psalmist (Ps. 119:160). So, meditating on Scriptures is an avenue to come to truth, especially if one’s heart is true (Ps. 51:6) and prayerful (Ps. 119:18; Eph. 1:17,18). Then God may reveal truth from His Holy Scriptures into the heart. However, if one’s heart is wicked and one’s attitude is arrogant, one may read Scriptures without coming to truth. So the fact that Scriptures are truth does not mean that everyone who reads or uses Scriptures will necessarily come to the truth. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, and he did so with Scripture (Lk. 4:9-11). Clearly, every use of Scripture is not necessarily a revelation of living truth for the situation at hand.

Other external catalysts which can be combined with spiritual revelation and result in truth include the stars (Matt. 2:2), the Spirit-anointed counsel of others (Prov. 11:14) and visions of angels (Lk. 2:9).

BIBLE MEDITATION ON TRUTH

Following are a few of the 235 references to truth in the King James Version of the Bible. Write out each one, and record what God reveals to you concerning truth. Memorize at least one verse on truth through which God is speaking powerfully to you. Come to your group meeting prepared to share this verse and the revelation of what it means to you.

For further insight, do a concordance search on the word “truth” and note your observations and conclusions.

God’s Word is true. (Psalm 119:160)

What is God’s Word called? (II Timothy 2:15)

What are the results of abiding in God’s Word? (John 8:31,32)

Jesus is Truth. (John 14:6)

God’s Spirit is Truth. (John 14:17)

Of Whom does the Spirit of Truth testify? (John 15:26)

What does the Spirit of Truth do? (John 16:13)

How is one sanctified? (John 17:15-19)

God leads us into truth. (Psalm 25:5)

The need for a true heart. (Psalm 51:6)

How does God make us know wisdom? (Psalm 51:6)

Truth comes through revelation in the heart (Psalm 119:18; Ephesians 1:17,18; John 16:13; I John 2:27).

God's truth endures. (Psalm 100:5)

Who does God hear? (Psalm 145:18)

Who hears Jesus' voice? (John 18:37)

How is the truth to be spoken? (Ephesians 4:15)

GROUP ACTIVITIES

GROUP LEADER: Follow the pattern for "Spirit-anointed Small Group Sharing" given in the introduction of this book.

1. Share your memory verse from this week's meditation, what God revealed to you from this verse, and the practical difference it will make in the way you live your life.
2. Have each group member share verses he has memorized and what God is speaking to him from these verses.
3. Have each one share other insights he has received and questions he has from this meditation.
4. Discuss: When God's Spirit leads us into truth, are we speaking of "spiritual truths" only, or all truth, both "secular" and "sacred"? Does God have the truths of all aspects of the universe within Him? Will He reveal them to those who seek Him with a true and righteous heart? Can a Spirit-filled Christian expect to receive divine revelation and truth within his heart and spirit for issues at the work place, as well as issues he faces while ministering to people?
5. Discuss: How is the biblical definition of truth different from the definition of truth you have been using in your life?
6. Discuss: How is the biblical definition of truth different from the definition of truth used by your culture, the medical profession, a philosopher, a scientist?
7. Journal and ask God what He wants to speak to you concerning truth. Record your journaling below and come prepared to share your journaling with the group.

JOURNALING AND NOTES: