

DO YOU NOT KNOW?

Joe Slater

Like so many other things, education can be good or bad, depending on what kind it is and how you use it. A Ph.D. degree (or lack thereof) makes one neither more nor less trustworthy. We ought not to be infatuated with education; neither should we denigrate it.

Many of the Corinthians considered themselves quite educated. After all, Corinth was a Greek city, and the Greeks put much stock in their philosophers. Philosopher is a compound word meaning “lover of wisdom.” Truly, as Paul wrote, “Greeks seek after wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:22). Unfortunately, most of them were so enthralled with the wisdom of men that they rejected the wisdom of God.

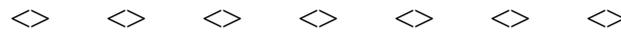
Nine times in First Corinthians the inspired apostle tweaked those self-professed wise folks with rhetorical questions: “Do you not know . . . ? (3:16; 5:6; 6:3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:24). Without going into the specific items of knowledge Paul mentioned, let us see two things about these questions:

First, Paul clearly implies that worldly-wise people do not necessarily know what they need to know. For all the education the Corinthians may have had relative to human philosophy and wisdom, they didn’t know (or refused to accept) the divine wisdom that would enlighten them about living so as to glorify God and be saved eternally. With bold irony, Paul challenged them repeatedly: “Do you not know?” You Corinthians, who are so wise and well-versed in philosophy – how can it be that you do not know these things?

Second, Paul’s questions tell us that it is, indeed, possible to know the truth. The popular approach in religion today says that the best we can do is formulate an opinion. Speculation, guess-work, and “maybe” rule

the day. One who answers, “I know . . .” (especially in religious matters) is quickly written off as an egotist and a kook. But Jesus said we can and will know the truth (John 8:32). Paul’s repetitious questions, “Do you not know . . .” express his disappointment. He had taught these people! They ought to have known already! Their lack of knowledge was all the more remarkable in light of their high opinion of their own wisdom.

Whether the world considers you “educated” or not, you need the wisdom that comes from God through His word. That is the truth that will make you free!



Faith and the Public Square

In the United States, people with views hostile to Biblical Christianity are satisfied with Christians as long as we keep our faith to ourselves. One said, “Keep all religion in your church, in your home, and out of the public square, and most of all, out of my face!” Another remarked, “Christian Right people can do what they want in their churches and homes, but not in the public arena.” (George Yancy, professor of sociology, University of North Texas, quoted in *Christianity Today*, 27 March 2015)

Our Christianity cannot be hidden in our church buildings! It must be taken to the marketplace. Compassion for the poor and homeless must be demonstrated where the poor and homeless are. Cries for social justice must be heard by those who make and enforce our laws. Our opposition to immorality must be heard where immorality is being approved. Our message of love and redemption through Jesus Christ is to be proclaimed to every living creature.

Question for atheists and secular humanists: Do you keep your faith out of the public arena?

--Cecil May, Jr. (Montgomery, AL) via Preacher Talk

Going Along With The Crowd

In Gevas, Turkey, in 2005, one sheep jumped off a cliff and then nearly 1,500 others followed. In the end, about one-third of them died.

“Everybody's doing it,” says the son. The father responds, “If everyone jumped off the cliff, would you do it?” Maybe he would! At least, if the cliff stood for destructive behaviors. Peer pressure was once thought to be a young person's issue, but we know now that it continues throughout life. The desire to be popular, liked, or successful leads people to compromise and follow the crowd. Gang members follow the leader's will to be praised and appreciated.

When people are members of a group, most will comply with the beliefs of the group, and even with greater compliance if the group is critical for one's own self esteem and worth. It works this way even if it is a church. Compliance is necessary for success for preachers, and leaders in general. Those who aspire in politics will usually adhere to the party line, and seldom break ranks.

Jesus broke ranks with the traditionalists, and legalists of His day and He got Himself killed. He was marked a maverick, and refused to “toe the line” set by the religious leaders of His day.

What about us? Are we so satisfied with the party line that we can't think for ourselves? Have we deceived ourselves in believing everything we're told? Can't people see the inconsistency of not eating in a church building, but drinking in it?

It is difficult to get people to choose a path for the right reasons. Many will choose to follow the majority (for the wrong reasons), and some will choose to follow the minority (for the wrong reasons). Each has its own reward. What matters most is this: Are we following God's lead?

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)