

Knowledge of God

Ponder: Do you know the Lord?

Scripture: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6a, NKJV).

We preachers like to quote this passage to promote attendance at Bible classes and individual Bible study at home. That's valid as far as it goes. However, deficiency of intellectual knowledge comprised only part of Israel's problem. Verse one of this chapter pinpoints "knowledge of God" as the critical need; that goes beyond intellectual knowledge "about" God.

Scripture, especially in the Old Testament, speaks of knowledge in the sense of relationship. To be sure, one cannot have a positive relationship with God without knowing and obeying His word. On the other hand, one can know the Bible inside out and backward intellectually while having no fellowship with the Lord.

Through Hosea, God said His people had "rejected knowledge" (v. 6b). He wanted a good relationship with them, and the Israelites had previously shared in it; but now they not only neglected it, they despised it!

The Lord went on to say they had "forgotten the law of your God" (v. 6c). We immediately think of "forgetting" in intellectual terms also; but again, we need to see beyond that point. Dr. James Strong (author of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance) defines the Hebrew term as meaning not only forget but cease to care. If you had asked one of Hosea's people if they "knew" anything about the Lord or His law, they might well have answered yes. But they didn't know Him! Likely, even their intellectual knowledge was marginal; but more to the point they cared nothing for obeying His law or having fellowship with Him.

Let me heartily recommend regular and prolonged Bible study! But please realize that intellectual knowledge of God's word profits nothing without the trusting obedience that results in the relational knowledge of God.

Do you know the Lord?

Hymn: "I Am Resolved No Longer To Linger"

Prayer: Father, You are worthy of our complete trust and obedience. May we diligently study Your word, but may we with equal diligence be doers, not just hearers. In Jesus' name, Amen.