

Knowledge, Discernment and Wisdom

Through Hosea's pen, God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." Hosea 4:6. While that is totally true, we need more than just knowledge. We need *discernment* and *wisdom*.

Knowledge is the simple possession of facts. *Discernment* is the ability to understand knowledge and how it should be applied to daily living. For example, in 1 Chronicles 12:32 we learn this reality, "From the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do." They had knowledge of their culture (the times) and knew from God's word how to respond with proper action.

However, knowledge and discernment still don't lead us to the goal. They are road signs to lead, but we still need something else: *wisdom*. Wisdom is the actual use of knowledge and discernment. Think about it, when someone does something really dumb, we say, "Well that wasn't wise!" Wisdom is the actual application of knowledge and discernment as it they are put into action.

James teaches us that even demons believe and tremble (James 2:19). They have the knowledge that Jesus is God's only begotten Son. But they do not act with wisdom. Paul, in Romans 7, confessed that sometimes he did not live up to what he knew.

We might say that knowledge is simply seeing the facts clearly, discernment is knowing *how* to use the facts, and wisdom is that actual *using* of those facts by living life in light of God's word. All three are vitally important and interdependent. But all three need one last powerful motivation to become lasting reality.

That last motivation: love! Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep my commandments," (John 14:15). Without knowledge we are destroyed (Hos. 4:6). Without discernment we fail to see the proper choices. Without wisdom we fail to actually apply knowledge and discernment. And without love we will fail to keep His commandments and ultimately, if I "...do not have love, I am nothing," (1 Corinthians 13:2).

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