

## THE KEY TO KNOWLEDGE

**“Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.” (Luke 11:52)**

In this passage Jesus pronounced six woes on the Pharisees and experts in the law – (Luke 11:42-52). Jesus said “Woe” to them because:

- 1 - They paid tithes but neglected justice and love.
- 2 - They loved the important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.
- 3 - They were like unmarked graves concealing their spiritual decay.
- 4 - They bound heavy burdens on others that they wouldn’t touch.
- 5 - Like their fathers had done, they rejected the prophets of God.
- 6 - They took away the key to knowledge, refused to accept Christ, and hindered those who did.

In this brief study we will focus on taking away the key to knowledge. Our approach will not be the last word or final answer to what it means to “take away the key to knowledge”, but will hopefully still be of help. A “key”, as you know, enables you to gain access to something. In this regard the “key” to knowledge provides access to knowledge. Let’s try to understand what it means to take away the key to knowledge!

### WHAT IS THE “KEY TO KNOWLEDGE”?

- Certainly the “key to knowledge” is not understanding the Greek and Hebrew languages. While understanding the original languages of Scripture may be a useful tool, these experts in the law could not take that away from anybody!
- Nor is the “key to knowledge” intelligence. This too was beyond their ability to “take away”.
- Nor was the “key to knowledge” access to information from learned teachers and commentaries. Again, the Pharisees and experts in the law had no ability to take this away.
- I believe the “key to knowledge” involves a humble and submissive heart. This, these wicked teachers could take away! If the experts in the law caused you to be proud, they would close the door to the wisdom of God.
- Remember! The converts of these arrogant experts were twice as much the sons of hell as they were (Matt. 23:15). Their arrogance and pride poisoned their minds with such self confidence that God could not tell them anything!
- Humility is the key! Isaiah wrote: **“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” (Is. 66:2).**
- The Psalmist said: **“He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.” (Ps. 25:9)**
- The Pharisees, by contrast, were not humble! Please consider this parable: **“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax**

collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Lk. 18:9-14)

- God “reveals” things to the humble! Jesus said: **“I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and you have revealed them unto little children”** (Matt. 11:25).
- On another occasion **“When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that,“they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”**” (Mk. 10-12).
- Remember! **“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”** (1 Pet. 5:5)
- **“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”** (1 Cor. 1:27-29)
- **IF SATAN CONVINCES YOU TO BE ARROGANT AND PROUD THEN HE HAS TAKEN AWAY YOUR KEY TO KNOWLEDGE!**

#### THE GOOD EXAMPLE OF KING SOLOMON

King Solomon was a very wise man. **“He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom. (I King 4:32-34)** Solomon’s great wisdom and knowledge, as you know, came from God and the “key” to obtaining it was his child like humility. Remember his prayer: **“ . . . I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”** (I Kings 3:7-9)

**“The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.”** (1 Kings 3:10-12)

## GOD GIVES WISDOM TO THOSE WHO CONFESS THEIR IGNORANCE

The “key” to receiving wisdom from God is admitting that you lack wisdom! **“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.”** (James 1:5)

Every parent has had the experience of hearing a child say “I know daddy”, or “I know momma”. Such pride prevents them from learning. It is hard to teach anyone who is arrogant and proud. Parental wisdom is best received when the child is willing, like Solomon, to admit ignorance and ask for help. This is also true of God’s wisdom.

Remember that “the full riches of complete understanding” and “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are in Christ. (Col. 2:2-3)

The “key” to getting into Christ is to be humble like a little child (Matt. 18:3). When we think that we are standing, we need to take heed lest we fall (1 Cor. 10:12). It was Peter’s cocky self confidence that caused him to deny Christ three times (Jn. 13:37-38). It is our cocky self confidence that will also lead to spiritual ignorance and failure. Further, if those whom we influence follow our example - then we too shall be guilty of taking away from them the “key to knowledge”. Let’s humbly say with Solomon - **“I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties”**.

## WE NEED TO BE BOTH HUMBLE AND DILIGENT

Timothy was an outstanding helper to the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote to the Philippians: **“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.”** (Phil. 2:19-23).

Here is a brief review of Timothy’s “knowledge”:

- Timothy’s faith was first in his grandmother, Lois, and then his mother, Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5).
- They taught him the holy Scriptures from the time he was an infant (2 Tim. 3:15).
- Timothy also had a spiritual gift given to him by the laying on of Paul’s hands (2 Tim. 1:6).
- Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer (1 Tim. 1:3).
- Timothy was to be diligent in his study of the Bible and to handle the word of God correctly (2 Tim. 2:15).
- He was to devote himself to the public reading of the Scriptures, and to preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 4:13).

- Yet, even when confronting those who opposed him, Timothy was to maintain a humble and teachable spirit: “Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.” (2 Tim. 2:23-26)
- It is when God grants us repentance that we can be lead to the knowledge of the truth!

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS A PART TO PLAY

- Paul wrote: **“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgement:”** (1 Cor. 2:14-15)
- This still involves humility, however, for God has chosen to dwell in those **“who are humble and contrite in spirit and tremble at my word”** (Is. 66:2).

#### JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE

- **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** (Matt. 11:28-30)
- **“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.”** (Phil. 2:5-7)
- **“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”** (Zech. 9:9)
- Jesus said: **“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”** (Jn. 6:38)
- Jesus also said: **“But the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what the Father has commanded me.”** (Jn. 14:31)
- Remember! **“the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”** (Matt. 20:28)
- We must be willing to serve. Jesus reminded his disciples: **“For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”** (Lk. 22:27)
- Peter knew this was true and wrote: **“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”** **“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”** When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:21-23)

YES! JESUS SET AN EXAMPLE FOR US BY HIS HUMILITY!

EVEN THOUGH HE WAS GOD HE TOOK SEVEN STEPS DOWN FROM HIS DEITY!  
(See Philippians 2:7-8)

- 1 - He made himself nothing.
- 2 - He took the very nature of a servant.
- 3 - He was made in human likeness.
- 4 - He was found in appearance as a man.
- 5 - He humbled himself.
- 6 - He became obedient unto death.
- 7 - Even death on a cross.

AT THAT POINT GOD BEGAN EXALTING JESUS WITH SEVEN STEPS UP!  
(See Philippians 2:9-11)

- 1 - God exalted him to the highest place.
- 2 - God gave him a name above every name.
- 3 - That every knee should bow.
- 4 - In heaven.
- 5 - On earth.
- 6 - And under the earth.
- 7 - And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

DON'T LET ANYONE ROB YOU OF HUMILITY

FOR CERTAINLY IT IS THE KEY TO KNOWLEDGE!