

God wants us not only to know the right thing but to do the right thing

As important as it is to have the truth, it's even more important to obey the truth we have. Failure to follow our conscience is not only a sin, but it is a worse sin than those we commit out of ignorance (Lk. 12:41-48). When what we do goes against what our conscience tells us we should be doing, that is a serious problem indeed.

The important principle of knowing and doing is emphasized in James: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing" (Jas. 1:22-25). And it is also in James that we read, "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

There is an expression that says "talk is cheap." In a certain sense, that's true. It takes very little integrity to say the right things about what people should do. What is of more consequence is the determination of a person to go ahead and do what he should. When we fail to do God's will, we may plead that our sin is only that of neglect, but God looks upon neglect as a serious matter. Sins of "omission" may not seem to us as terrible as those of "commission," but if we end up being lost, it will be little comfort to know that the sins for which we lost our souls were "only" those of neglect.

We live in a society where the Bible and its contents are much discussed. Many people know many things about what God has said. But too few are doing anything about that, even among those who are members of the Lord's church. It's sobering to realize that those who know more are expected to do more. Jesus said, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required" (Lk. 12:48). This week let's meditate on the importance of obedience and determine that we're going to accept the responsibility that goes along with knowing what we know. **God wants us not only to know the right thing but to do the right thing.** If we seek God's blessings, let's remember: it's not the forgetful hearer but the doer of the work who'll be blessed in what he does!

Monday: Deuteronomy 29:29

Key Idea: God has given us His word so that we may know what He wants us to do.

Questions for Family Growth: Has God told us in His word everything we might wish to know just to satisfy our curiosity? If not, why has He told us the things He has told us? When we study God's word, what kinds of help or information should we be looking for primarily?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 3:21-26.

Tuesday: Matthew 7:24-27

Key Idea: It is foolish to know what God wants us to do and not do it.

Questions for Family Growth: In this story, who are those whom Jesus compared to the foolish man? Who are those compared to the wise man? What will happen if we hear God's word and do nothing about it? Consider [Lk. 12:41-48](#).

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 3:27-30](#).

Wednesday: James 2:14-26

Key Idea: If we only have faith and not works, our faith is of no use.

Questions for Family Growth: What is "faith"? What are "works"? What if we have works, but no faith? What if we have faith, but no works? Should we expect to go to heaven without obeying God? What does [Hb. 5:9](#) say?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 3:31-35](#).

Thursday: Matthew 21:28-32

Key Idea: God is pleased when we actually do His will, and not just when we say we will obey Him.

Questions for Family Growth: What did each of the man's two sons say when he told them to go work in his vineyard? In the end, which one pleased his father? Which matters the most in determining our character: our words or our deeds?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 4:1-4](#).

Friday: Ezra 7:10

Key Idea: Before we teach God's word to others, we must know it and do it ourselves.

Questions for Family Growth: What three important things did Ezra prepare his heart to do? What will happen if we try to show others God's way but we aren't living in that way ourselves? In trying to influence others, how important is our personal example?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 4:5,6](#).

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