

Modern Christianity Has One Fatal Flaw

The sad state of affairs in America is that many people attend church every Sunday but they have a hard time obeying the Lord and being led by the Holy Spirit in their day to day lives.

The clearest example of what the real Christian life should look like can be found by looking at the disciples in the Book of Acts. Jesus commissioned them, and then they obeyed His command by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you."

All too often in our Christian culture, the emphasis on making disciples stays on "teaching them" without including the second part of the command, "to observe all thing I have commanded you." Most Christians believe that "making disciples" equates to having more people listen to sermons or attending Bible studies on a week by week basis.

Mental knowledge is not wrong or bad. It can be very useful and, for believers, there will be times it is necessary to live out the life God is calling them to live. However, mental knowledge is not the end-all of the Christian life.

Because Western thinking is built upon the Enlightenment movement of the 1700s and 1800s, and because the Enlightenment was centered on the pursuit of knowledge, this emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge actually affects every part of our lives in America. There are Enlightenment overtones and emphases in Western Christianity without us realizing it. It is all we have ever known.

The Enlightenment proposed that all of man's problems could be resolved through greater knowledge. Reason, logic and scholarly pursuits were glorified during the Enlightenment period and after. The problem is, the Enlightenment dealt primarily with the mind. Christianity involves the mind, but it is not limited to the mind. Christianity's largest emphases are on the heart and the Spirit

The born-again experience is a supernatural experience that goes beyond the mind. Jesus said in Luke 10:27a to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind." Most American Christians, in their pursuit of greater biblical knowledge, have succeeded in loving the Lord with their minds, but they have failed in the other parts of the command. This has resulted in a lack of obedience. Notice Jesus listed the heart first and the mind last.

A person can have full knowledge of right and wrong in his or her mind, but their heart can still be unable to make the right choice.

In Ezekiel 36:26-27, speaking of the New Covenant, God says "Also, I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."

The motivation for obedience comes from the heart, not the mind. This is why the Jews in the Old Testament had such a hard time staying obedient. Their minds could see the law, but their hearts would not bend. This always led to disobedience.

Here is a good analogy to further expound on this.

A father leaves a list of chores for his children to do while he is gone. The father looks at the kids before he leaves the home and says, "Whatever you do, make sure you get the chores

on the list done.” Hours later when the father comes home, if the chores are not done, the father will look at his children and say, “Did I not tell you to do your chores?”

Now imagine the kids say, “Dad, we memorized your list. We even read books about the ways we could best finish the chores. We came up with strategies to do the chores. We even translated the list you gave us into Greek, and we can now explain the fullest meaning of what you asked us to do.”

The father would say, “But you didn’t obey what I told you to do.” The good news is that God’s commands to us are not chores but opportunities to grow and mature while experiencing joy, love, peace and hope

This analogy sums up the current state of Christianity in America. Jesus Christ is calling each believer to preach the gospel and make disciples. To do this would be to obey Him. However, as every statistic shows, this is not happening

The greatest hindrance to the Great Commission taking place here in our country is the love of the pursuit of knowledge.

This pursuit creates a disobedience loop in the life of the believer, and it is something very similar to this thought process, *I want to serve God. I need to learn more to better serve God. There is so much more I need to learn. The more I learn, the more I want to serve God. The more I want to serve God, the more I need to learn.* I see this mindset in countless believers. It hinders them from being able to ever get to the place where they can take a simple step of obedience.

There is supposed to be only one thing on that altar of our hearts, and that is Jesus Christ. When He is our focus, we obey Him. Knowledge can be an idol, and all idols must be removed from the life of the believer. Jesus would rather have us take one step in obedience, being led by the Holy Spirit in doing so, than to have 30 years of study and no steps of obedience.

True Christianity is not in-depth knowledge of doctrine, and neither is it endless study of commentaries. Likewise, true Christianity is not about how many sermons a person can listen to or how many church services they can attend. True Christianity is about obeying Jesus through the power and operation of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

In John 14:15, Jesus said "If you love me, keep my commandments." Jesus didn't say, "If you love me, spend the next 30 years of your life trying to learn more in the hopes that one day you will have learned enough to begin to obey me." The moment we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit gives us the ability and the enablement to begin to obey. Paul said in 1 Cor. 8:1 that "Knowledge produces arrogance, but love edifies." When the end goal is to knowledge, it always leads to pride. When the end goal is obedience, it always results in drawing closer to Jesus Christ. So as you grow in your faith in Christ, make sure to not sacrifice obedience on the altar to knowledge. Love Jesus and obey Him. {eoa}

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