

July 11, 2021

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Some Know Less Than What They Think They Know

By Harold Hancock

I once saw a humorous statement that read, “Those people who think they know everything annoy those of us who really do.” Many a truth has been spoken in jest. Perhaps this adequately describes the thought process of some. They know others do not know everything, but they are blind to their own deficiencies in knowledge and wisdom. The truth is that none of us know everything, and sadly, some know less than what they think they know.

Many people think they know God’s will by the happening of events in their lives or the lives of others. They make judgments about others and choose their own courses of action based on their interpretations of these events. However, their “understanding” of God’s will is not by faith; faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). They have no word from God about these matters. They are presumptuous and, often, self-willed. They do not know what they think they know.

King Saul illustrates well this form of presumptuous, selfish thinking. The scriptures declare: “*and David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah . . . And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, ‘God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.’ Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men*” (1 Samuel 23:5-8), Saul assumed wrongly that God was delivering David into his hands. Saul declared that God was delivering David into his hands because that was what he, Saul, wanted. Those who know the rest of the story know that God did not deliver David into Saul’s hands on this occasion or any other occasion. Saul knew less than what he thought he knew.

This is not to say that God hasn’t ever declared His purpose for events that happened in life. For instance, when the rain began to fall in the days of Noah, the people knew it was because of their wickedness. They knew this only

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because God declared it to them by the preaching of Noah. Today, God “*makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust*” (Matthew 5:45). Without “special revelation” one cannot determine if he or others are good or evil or what God’s will is by the weather they are experiencing or other happenings in life. Today, God does not give us “special revelation” about the happenings of life. Today, God speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2), whose words have been delivered “*once for all*” (Jude 1:3) and recorded for us in scripture (2 Timothy 3:1-17). Today, we know only what God has revealed in His written Word. We determine right and wrong by that Word and then determine our course of action.

Even the apostle Paul was careful not to assume more than he actually knew when writing to Philemon about Onesimus (Philemon 1). When writing about “why” Onesimus had departed from Philemon, was converted by Paul, and was then being sent back to Philemon, Paul only ventured a “*perhaps*” (Philemon 15). Be careful not to be presumptuous or self-willed in determining or declaring God’s will from the happenings of life. You may know less than what you think you know.

If You Envy, You Lose!

By Harold Hancock

We sometimes pay close attention to our lives and guard against sins such as fornication and drunkenness, but we are sometimes careless about other matters such as envy and jealousy. However, these are sins, too, and they can do us much harm.

Consider the subject of envy and notice the teachings of the following passages: “*But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth*” (James 3:14). “*Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy*” (Romans 13:13). Peter urges us as newborn babes in Christ to “*lay aside envying*” (1 Peter 2:1). “*Envy*” is listed by Paul as a “work of the flesh” as well as are adultery, fornication, and drunkenness; he avows that those who do such things — including envy — cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21). Do not allow envy to be a part of your life!

Envy is a feeling of displeasure, discontentment, or ill will that is produced at one’s hearing of or witnessing another’s advantages, possessions, or good fortunes. Are you disturbed by the blessings of others? Then you are guilty of envy!

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Within the scriptures, there are numerous examples of people who yielded to envy. Many of these stories reveal that those who are guilty of envy travel a tragic path and come to a bitter end. They warn us: envy is not harmless, and those who succumb to it are not innocent.

Cain seemingly envied Abel when Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God and his was not. We read, "*And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*" Cain was unhappy because God's favor rested on Abel; by definition, that is envy. Furthermore, it was this envy that lead Cain to murder his brother. Envy is often the first step in a longer path of sin.

The older brother in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) was guilty of envy and jealousy. Rather than rejoicing as the father did when the younger brother repented and returned home, the older brother was angered by the attention and favors given the younger brother. What a shame that some sin because others repent.

The tragedy of envy is twofold. First and foremost, it robs one of heaven. Remember, those who commit this sin and refuse to repent shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven (Gal.5:21). Envy also robs us of happiness in this life. When we envy, we are the ones who experience the feeling of discontentment. We are the unhappy ones!

The misery that envy causes in this life is well illustrated by Haman (Esther 5:10-14). He was so envious of the position occupied by Mordecai that he could not enjoy the good shown to him. Haman told some of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king. Furthermore, Haman said, "*Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate*" (Esther 5:11-13).

Let us seek to keep our life free from all sins, including the sin of envy. If you envy, you lose!

Love In The Home

Love in a home is like a lamp around whose steady glow
The children gather safe and warm though storms outside may blow.
And in the shadowy years to come, the children long since grown
Will light love's lamps in other homes for children of their own.

— B. Dolliver

Example

‘Twas a sheep, not a lamb, that
strayed away, In the parable Jesus
told; A grown-up sheep that had gone
astray From the ninety and nine in the
fold. Out on the hillside, out in the
cold,

‘Twas a sheep the Good
Shepherd sought, And back to the
flock, safe to the fold, ‘Twas a sheep
the Good Shepherd brought.

Why for the sheep should we
earnestly long, And as earnestly hope
and pray?

Because there is danger, If they
go wrong, They will lead the lambs
astray. For the lambs will follow the
sheep, you know, Wherever the sheep
may stray; When the sheep go wrong,
it will not be long ‘Till the lambs are
as wrong as they.

And so with the sheep we
earnestly plead, For the sake of the
lambs, today; If the sheep are lost,
what a terrible cost Some lambs will
have to pay!

— *Author Unknown*

Study Your Bible

July Birthdays:

The 9th Ruth Davis;
The 10th John Randolph;
The 29th Opal Yarbrough

*Visitors — We pray that you
benefit spiritually from our
worship together and hope
to see you again.*

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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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