

I Would Not Have You Ignorant

II Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

God's will for His people has always been that they know those things revealed in His Word. Only when we know God's Word can we fulfill His will in our lives. God wants us to know.

I Corinthians 11:3 states, "But I would have you know..." God's wanting us to know is found several times in His Word.

Colossians 2:1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

This statement is put in a positive vein: I want you to know. Another way of expressing this is to say, "I would not have you ignorant." "To know" equals "not to be ignorant." The reason God would inspire men to express knowing in the negative, "not be ignorant," is to emphasize the positive greatness that is involved.

When it says, "I would not have you ignorant," it could have been translated, "I do not desire you to be ignorant." Desire is not just reason but also emotion.

The Greek word is *thelō*. There are two different words used for "desire" in the Bible. *Thelō* is "desiring by natural emotional impulse," which is stronger than desiring by reasoning. To desire because of reason is the word *boulomai*. God did not choose that word in this particular situation.

The word "not" is absolutely not. I desire not, absolutely not, to have you ignorant, brethren.

So, what is God saying? God, with a natural emotional impulse, wants us to be so totally knowing that there are no ifs, and's or but's about it. He wants us to get to the place that we know that we know that we know. We are to be so certain that there are absolutely no questions about it.

These words, "I would not have you ignorant," are used seven times in the Word of God, the number seven being very significant in the usage of numbers in Scripture. Seven always stands for perfection. Let us look at these seven usages and see what God wants us "not to be ignorant of."

1. The fruit which a person carrying on the ministry of reconciliation will bear. Romans 1:13
2. The Mystery of Christ in a believer. Romans 11:25
3. The Old Testament believers' walk, looking forward to Christ. I Corinthians 10:1

4. Spiritual matters consisting of the five gift ministries and the nine manifestations of the holy spirit. I Corinthians 12:1
5. Commitment under pressure. II Corinthians 1:8
6. Satan's devices. II Corinthians 2:11
7. Those who are dead in relationship to the return of Christ. I Thessalonians 4:13

Romans 1:13 contains the first usage. The first usage of any word or expression in the Bible is important and should be given special attention.

Romans 1:13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) [but was hindered up until now] that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

"Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I [Paul] purposed to come unto you...that I might have some fruit among you..."

A person has to become so involved in the ministry which God has given him that he goes out, he reaches out to people, in order to see fruit, "that I might have some fruit among you also." Two verses earlier, in Romans 1:11, Paul wrote, "For I long to see you..." It was Paul's earnest desire to visit the Church at Rome. Why?

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Paul wanted the believers established in the principles of the Word, living those principles, day in and day out. The ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors are spiritual gifts.

They are special abilities given by God to certain believers who desire to impart God's Word for the benefit of the people so that the people may be established. If the ministries are in operation, then there has been fruit. Paul won Timothy to the Lord. That is fruit.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for [or with a view toward the saints doing] the work of the ministry, for [with a further view toward building up] the edifying of the body of Christ:

We are not to be ignorant of men with ministries. Men of God should be out planting the Word to get fruit, not out causing division, not leading men and women astray. Men with ministries, men of God should be out planting the Word to get fruit.

That is why the first thing Paul says we are “not to be ignorant” of is that men of God should be out planting the Word to get fruit. Without the teaching of the Word there is no growth. This is the first usage of “I would not have you ignorant.”

Romans 11:25 is the second time the phrase “not be ignorant” is used in God’s Word.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

God does not want us ignorant of the Great Mystery. God absolutely does not want us to be ignorant that the Church today is one Body, and has been called out from both Jews and Gentiles. Yet how ignorant most people are of the Mystery, the very thing that God says we are not to be ignorant of.

1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: [it] and [but] that Rock was Christ.

The forefathers drank of that spiritual rock which was to follow their time, and that rock was Christ. So God does not want us ignorant of the believers of Israel who looked forward to the day of Christ.

This is referring to the cloud that led Israel in their Exodus from Egypt. During the day they were led by a cloud and at night by a pillar of fire. At this time, the Old Testament believers looked forward to the coming of that rock which is Christ.

Remember Jesus’ saying to Peter of himself, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” Christ is the rock.

John 8:56 tells how Abraham looked forward to the coming of the Christ, the Messiah: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”

This third usage of “not to be ignorant” concerns Israel’s walk in Christ before Christ ever came. They looked for this day; they looked forward to this rock, Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual [matters], brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

God would not have us ignorant of spiritual matters, and these spiritual matters in the context of this verse pertain to five gift ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors, and teachers, and to the nine manifestations of the holy spirit which are: speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, faith, miracles, and healing. So we are not to be ignorant of these matters.

Fourthly, God does not want us ignorant concerning spiritual matters which include the gift ministries and the manifestations of the holy spirit. We are to know about these spiritual matters.

II Corinthians 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

Paul and the believers were definitely having to demonstrate their commitment under pressure. Paul said, "I would not have you ignorant that we were pressed out of measure." This was commitment under pressure because the persecution they withstood brought them almost to the point of death.

Few people are committed enough to God's Word to be able to stand this degree of pressure. Paul did not want other believers to be ignorant of the trouble they had endured and their determination to withstand it. Remember the Scriptures say that there is one ultimate requirement of a steward, and that is that he be found faithful. A steward of God's Word does not recant or give up.

II Corinthians 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

Did Paul budge? No. That is commitment. God would not have you ignorant of the reality that you must be committed if you really want to give people consolation, comfort, and help.

The sixth area we must know about in order to live the more abundant life is in II Corinthians.

II Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

We are not blind to the adversary's tricks. God does not want us ignorant of Satan's devices. Satan presents unexpected situations to us in a thousand different ways; that is why we cannot afford to be ignorant of his tricks. Moreover, we will not be if we are committed and have our roots established. God wants us to be absolutely smart.

He emphasizes this by stating II Corinthians 2:11 in negative form: "for we are not ignorant of Satan's devices." In other words, we are educated concerning Satan's devious ways.

I Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

We are not to be ignorant of those who are dead. Again, if we are ignorant concerning death, we are directly opposed to God's will.

Many Christian churches teach the opposite of what God's Word says regarding the dead. They usually teach that the dead are in heaven right now, having a wonderful time, in contrast to the Word of God, which says so clearly that when a man is dead, he is dead until the return of Christ.

Why should we have Christ's return and a resurrection if everybody who has died is already in heaven enjoying the great hereafter? God wants us to be knowledgeable concerning them which are asleep, and He wants us knowledgeable about the return of Christ.

People are ignorant because they do not know the rightly divided Word of Truth. The Bible is the Word of Truth, and to the end that we rightly divide it we have the true Word.

We are to be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11 who searched the Scriptures daily to see if what they were being taught was so.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

God does not want people ignorant, and it is not God's fault when people are unknowing, for God has given His Word and His Word is light. We all obviously start out ignorant and need to be taught. Even Jesus' disciples frequently needed special assistance.

Luke 9:43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

They were ignorant because they were afraid to ask Jesus to explain to them what they did not understand. Had they asked him, he would have told them and thereby dispelled their ignorance. People today are afraid to go to the Word of God and let the Word speak because it might not corroborate their beliefs and ideas.

They are afraid to let that Word be the Word. For that same reason, the disciples here were ignorant of Jesus' saying. They feared to ask him.

Matthew 13 contains the parable of the sower. Verse 3 says, "Behold a sower went forth to sow." After relating the entire parable, Jesus simply concluded by saying, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Then he goes on to a new parable. But later on, after a period of time, the disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable of the sower.

Matthew 13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

Here, they asked Jesus to explain to them the parable of the sower and the seed.

In Luke 9 their fear kept them ignorant, while in Matthew 13 they did not guess they asked.

As long as the Word is not made known people are and will remain ignorant. Our one and only concern is to make this living Word of God available to people so that they need not to be ignorant.

I Timothy 2:4 is a concise scripture which tells us the extent of what God wants of us all. "Get saved and come into the knowledge of the truth." He does not want us ignorant.

I Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

God wants us to know about the fruit which the person who is carrying out the ministry of reconciliation will bear; about the Mystery that Gentiles are fellow heirs of Christ and have Christ in them.

He wants us to know about the Old Testament believers drinking from the spiritual rock that was to be Christ; about the spiritual matters of gift ministries and the manifestations of the holy spirit; about the need for commitment to God's Word in order to stand even during persecution.

He wants us to know about Satan's devices so he cannot get an advantage of us; about those who are now asleep but who will awaken with the return of Christ. God has made all of this known to us so that we can fulfill God's will in our lives. We can live our lives not in ignorance in these seven great areas, but in the knowledge of the truth of God's Word.