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TRUE AWARENESS

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October 2006.

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"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3-4)

Have you ever asked yourself how we can profess to know Jesus for sure?

At times this simple question confuses us so that we find it difficult to answer correctly. The reason for this is that we do not know Him well enough.

When I say we do not know Him I do not mean by some mystical spiritual revelation, dream, or vision of the awareness of His godliness or goodness. We don't know Him because we do not do what Jesus says and we do not live the way He wants us to live.

In **John 17:3** Jesus said: *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

If we want to have eternal life, it is certain that we must know the Lord. To know the Lord should be our first aim. What is the characteristic of a man who knows Him?

► **1. A MAN WHO KNOWS THE LORD LIVES ACCORDING JESUS' COMMANDMENTS**

Nowadays Christians are inclined to mystify the Christian life too much. We convince ourselves that we know the Lord for many reasons: we have attended church for many years, attended Bible college or a theological seminary, we hold leading positions in the church.

However The Scriptures say that to know the Lord primarily means to follow to the Word

✳ **To know the Lord should be our first aim.**



of Jesus and live as He lived: *"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."* (1 John 2:6)

These days many Christians declare to know Lord but neither follow nor live according to His Words.

Yet they are mistaken. They have a false concept of what it means to be in Christ; they think they can belong to the Lord and live like the world at the same time. Most of them have left their personal relationship with Lord; they neither read nor follow His Word, rather they simply try to be good people.

Consequently, they start living a peculiar life without much responsibility; their spiritual conversations become lofty and they seem to be wiser and cleverer than other believers. Most often they bear no fruit, are lazy, go from church to church, and justify their sin; while at the same time claim to know and follow God's will.

The apostle John wrote this letter for the same reason, to confront false teachers in the early Christianity who preached that it was not a command for the born-again believer to leave their sinful behavior.

These false teachers preached that a believer can declare to "know the Lord" as their Savior

while at the same time remain cold and unbending in their relationship with God, in obedience to His commands.

In other words, such Christians can go to church, claim to know God's will, but live as they want. They don't need to leave their old way of living or change their way of thinking they simply need to put on a "Christian mask".

It is a great problem today for the church of Christ. It is easier to proclaim salvation than live and follow the Savior.

The apostle John said that such people are liars and deceive themselves: *"He who says, 'I know Him' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."* (1 John 2:4)

We cannot lead a double life. If we declare to know the Lord one thing is certain, we are freed from sin once and for all and are no longer in darkness: *"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.... If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* (1 John 1:5-6, 8)

When John said that the Lord is the light he was saying that the Lord is perfectly holy, stands in the truth, and is the only one able to release us from the darkness of sin.

Sin cannot be present in God's presence. If we want to know God and have fellowship

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with Him we must live freed from sin. We cannot be His on Sundays while from Monday through Saturday live according to our own will. If we live like that we live in sin and we stray from the Kingdom of Heaven. *"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."*

(Galatians 5:19-21)

A man who knows the Lord is one who once and for all rejects sin and follows Jesus' commandments; he doesn't live in darkness and according to the flesh but lives in truth and follows His will: *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth..." (1 John 1:6)*

▶ 2. A MAN WHO KNOWS THE LORD LIVES AS JESUS LIVED.

If we claim to live in Him then *"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6).*

Once, while paying a counseling visit, I was astonished by a sentence posted on the front door; I even thought it was not from the Bible. It read: *"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."* When I found that verse in the Bible I was shocked because I felt I that I didn't quite live as He did.

How serious that sentence is! When we from pentecostal-charismatic backgrounds read it, we first think of signs and wonders. However, to live as Jesus lived means more than performing miracles, it means to be obedient and serve those around you in love.

It also means to be ready to forgive those who speak evil of us, to give when somebody asks, to give more than is required, to die to self, to relinquish our own desires and ambitions, to love our wives *"as Christ loved His church"*; *"Wives, submit to your own husband"*; *"do not provoke your children"*; and live humbly before other people.

I believe today hell is full of Christians, pastors, spiritual workers, and theologians who preached about Christ but never really knew Him. Why? Because they didn't want to live their lives as He lived. After He touched them they decided to continue living their lives thinking that it was enough to learn about Him and become "a good man".

Such people like to hear about Jesus, listen to sermons, sing, and dance, but when the time comes to do something that Jesus commanded, they do nothing—not even to move a finger.

The same situation existed in the time of the prophet Ezekiel. People listened to the Words

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of God, shouted amen and hallelujah, but didn't do what they had heard. Their hearts were in the grip of sin. They even invited others to come to hear the word of the Lord. But when they heard it they didn't obey it. *"As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.' So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them."* (Ezekiel 33:30-32)

They behave as the Pharisees. Jesus scolded them in chapter seven of the gospel of Mark. Such people may follow certain church activities but their hearts will remain distant from God and cold.

Therefore pastors are wondering why such anger and hatred exists among believers, while the believers wonder

where their pastor's vanity comes from and why preachers and spiritual workers no longer talk or associate with common people. Perhaps they need to schedule an appointment or call them by their title.

Jesus didn't live like that. Although He was the King of kings, the people in His time didn't have to make appointments to meet with Him, the company He kept was common people, He washed the feet of His disciples, He was able to say "forgive me", and His disciples did not have to say: "Your highness, apostle, pastor, highest Lamb, may we ask you something?"

Such people do not live as Jesus did. They are described by Jesus words spoken to the Pharisees: *"Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me,"* (Mark 7:6-7).

Talking about false teachers, (false Christians), Titus said: *"They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work."* (Titus 1:16) They are just like that – despicable, arrogant, and disobedient; bad believers and spiritual workers, bad as fathers and mothers, bad as workers, and are a bad testimony.

The other day I learned the reason behind the divorce of one of my former professors; he had flirted and committed adultery with another person in the college. This person still teaches at the college. One thing is certain, although he teaches from the Scriptures, he is not aware of the Lord.

★ **It is time for Jesus to cleanse His home from adultery and the sins of the fathers who with their lives destroy the good testimony of "the way of truth."**

Adultery, pornography, financial misconduct, lies, betrayal, anger, hatred, political plotting, jealousy, denomination contests; a lot of words can be used to describe pastors, theologians, spiritual workers and believers in Christianity. It is time for Jesus to cleanse His home from adultery and the sins of the fathers who with their lives destroy the good testimony of “the way of truth”; and it is time for Him to raise up a new generation of dedicated Christians who will cleanse the filth of His body by their godly lives.

A man who claims to be aware of the Lord should live as Jesus lived!

▶ **3. A MAN WHO IS AWARE OF THE LORD LOVES HIS BROTHERS AND REMAINS IN THE LIGHT**

“He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” (1 John 2:9-11)

How many believers say they know the Lord and cannot have a cup of coffee with another believer who is from another denomination or movement?

When you mention brothers or sisters from other churches they despise them in their heart or feel a measure of competition while finding it impossible to say one good word about them. Their faces will often appear nervous. Pretending to be busy or giving

other such excuses, they avoid community with them. What kind of spirituality is this? Churches cannot cooperate because of theological differences. Everybody thinks himself to be better than the others. The true reason is jealousy, fear, and envy. Politicians can sit with their opponets for a drink. Spiritual workers nowadays are so quick to take up offenses against other believers and cannot release them; therefore they don’t want to associate with them. Sometimes we believe we will be the only ones in the heaven. How will we ever come together in heaven when we cannot say hello to each other here on the earth?

John says very clearly: *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)*

If we say that we are aware of the Lord we are then in community with each other. The commandment to love each other is both in the Old and New Testaments. Apostle John said that it was not a new but an old commandment and through Jesus it was described in the New Testament in a more radical way: *“Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning...” (1 John 2:7)*

★ **If we say that we are aware of the Lord we are then in community with each other.**



In **John 13:34-35** Jesus clearly said: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

If we claim to know the Lord we will then love our brothers and sisters. This love is self-sacrificing, unselfish, trusting. This love will build in us longsuffering and keep us strong and united in this world so opposed to Christ.

This love will rule not only amongst our denominations but also outside our “safe” borders. This love is greater than organizational love and will not ignore sin or cause us to take leave of our senses. Actually, when John speaks about such love he is referring more to our inner heart, which will not despise or ignore other people or treat other Christians as the enemy.

Christian love is not just handshakes and hugs; rather it is our decision to show concern for a brother or sister, to honor them regardless of how we feel about them. Love is primarily a choice. Christ chose to love us. He didn’t sacrifice Himself because He felt like it.

If we claim to be aware of the Lord and yet don’t wish to associate with one another we will walk further into spiritual blindness and eternal darkness: *“But he*

who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” (1 John 2:11)

The prophet Jeremiah said of these believers, pastors, theologians and spiritual workers: *“Therefore their way shall be to them Like slippery ways; In the darkness they shall be driven on And fall in them.” (Jeremiah 23:12)* They do not last long because they often fall into traps put by the Lord. At the beginning they may appear passionate and knowledgeable; they may shout and dance but because of bitterness become blind and fall into traps of perversion and sin. Proverbs gives us a good example of this: *“The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; He who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there.” (Proverbs 22:14)*

A man who claims to be aware of the Lord loves his brothers and constantly remains in the light!

Love in Lord’s manner helps us to constantly forgive and step bravely forward into relationship with the Lord and people without fear of harm. This love will not lead us into isolation, bitterness and envy, because *“He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.” (1 John 2:10)*

★ **Love is primarily a choice. Christ chose to love us. He didn’t sacrifice Himself because He felt like it.**

► **4. A MAN WHO IS AWARE OF THE LORD IS IN HIS PRESENCE AND DOESN’T LOVE THE WORLD.**

To be acquainted with a person, we must approach him. If we want to be acquainted

with the Lord we must approach Him and maintain kingdom values.

It is interesting how Apostle John used the word *“to be acquainted with”*. John talks about fathers and says that it is written to them. *“Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.” (1 John 2:13)*

The Greek word for *“to be acquainted with”* used here means to know somebody by experience or to be acquainted with a person.

People who know the Lord are people who primarily know Him by experience. It doesn't mean that they know Him from books, Christian manuals, or seminars but are those who spend time with Him. *“The secret place”* is an expression not foreign to them.

How much time do we spend with Jesus during the day or week, five or ten minutes? How much time do we spend in front of the TV or with friends, five or six hours a day? It is then no wonder that we know more about the world than about the Creator of the world. This is why we are carnal and worldly; why we are more with the world than with Him

We grow lazy, we don't want to pray, read the Bible, or testify. We did these things when we had nothing better to do but now that we are comfortable we no longer *“feel”* the need for Jesus.

If, by chance, we pray the greatest part of the prayer is directed toward our needs. We fell it is vital to pray for an exam, a new cell

phone (because our old one is already six months old), new trousers, an apartment, a car, success at work, and other similar things. All our efforts are directed to become more like the world. Our time is shaped by the world, not by Jesus. All we think about and talk about is the latest movie, car, or hairstyle, not Jesus. Our lifestyle is determined by TV shows such as *“Desperate Housewives”*; or *“Will and Grace”*. We know more about the actors on *“Friends”* than about the people from the Bible. It is no wonder there is no awakening in the body of Christ.

Our new programs, brochure designs, web sites, or form of worship will not help us either. We need to draw near to the Creator; this is the only solution! *“But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord.” (Psalm 73:28)*

Worldly Christians do not know the Lord!

Worldliness is not only limited to external behavior – the people we associate with, places we go, or activities we enjoy. Worldliness is internal because it begins in our heart and is characterized by three attitudes mentioned by apostle John *“Lust of the eyes”* - preoccupation with gratifying our physical desires, *“lust of the flesh”*, - craving and accumulating things and bowing to god of materialism, *“the*

✦ **If we want to be acquainted with the Lord we must approach Him and maintain kingdom values.**



pride of life" - obsession with one's status or importance. **(1 John 2:16)**

For a man who knows the Lord, faithfulness is vital, self-control, a spirit of generosity, and commitment to humble service.

A man who knows the Lord does not love the world, because the love of the Father is in him: *"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* **(1 John 2:15)**

If we want to know the Lord, it time we began doing what He did, not being hearers only. It is time we relinquished our sinful vanity, made radical movement to turn away from sin and old habits, and forgave those who insulted us in order to live as Jesus lived. *"Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. "* **(1 John 3:18)**

It is time for us to draw near to Jesus and come into His presence. Our passion for Him will be renewed and love for the world will be cleansed away. Then we will be able to say that we know the Lord and have "life" in ourselves and in our

churches. *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.!"* **(James 4:8-9)**

John says: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* **(1 John 1:9)**

Confess your sins in such a way that you will not return to them; turn to Jesus and become strong, be freed from this world and the evil one. Jesus wants to renew us to be people who know Him not only by reputation but by experience, as well. Only as such will you see His glory and *"abide forever "* **(1 John 2:17)**

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