

## **PROGRAM 95 TEASER**

A wealthy man took his son to spend a couple of nights on a farm with what the rich man called “poor folks”. He wanted his son to appreciate all the things money can buy. On their return, he asked his son what he had learned. The answer must have left the wealthy father stunned! That story and so much more will now be told. It’s all part of today’s program “Relationship versus religion: What a Difference”—on More Than Talk.

## **PROGRAM 95 PAGE 1**

### **Relationship vs. Religion: What a Difference!**

#### **PAGE 1 God’s Way of Spelling “Knowledge”**

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Proverbs 1:7

Knowledge! The 20th century saw the word as a replacement for God. And many of those who loved the Lord did not escape the clutches of that powerful force - "knowledge." Webster defines knowledge as "the act, fact, or state of knowing...all that has been perceived or grasped by the mind." But the question remains: knowing what? There is a human knowledge, much of it useful in life, which leads to diplomas, degrees and doctorates. But without that supernatural knowledge that comes from faith in God, human knowledge can be destructive because it takes the place of God. That's why Paul stated that knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. (I Corinthians 8:1)

Today's professors would appear as kindergartners in the face of Solomon's knowledge. But the wisest of men knew that unless the reverential fear of the Lord was the foundation of a life, the house of knowledge would be of no eternal value and would ultimately disintegrate. That's why God tells us that virtue must precede knowledge, and temperance (self-control) must follow. (2 Peter 1:5-7) The glory of God - not the glory of self - must be the motivation behind all learning. While it is true that today's Church is worldly smart with the best educated pastors, full circle

ministries and highest available technology, we are often spiritually dumb as deception reigns supreme concerning the attributes of real knowledge in morals, in priorities (knowledge of the Word and energy put into the eternal), brevity of life, scriptural literacy, and humility that brings discernment and sound spiritual judgment. A healthy fear of the Lord will keep your mind humble as you learn, and your courses and books in line with what God - and not the world - approves.

### Knowing God Makes All the Difference

Life's always filled with many lessons  
some we have to learn time and again  
Well I took time to pause and study people  
and learn the lesson from the lives of men.

Many brilliant men with such vast knowledge  
those so rich they're filled with foolish pride.  
Kings and presidents with total power  
but when they die I hear a voice inside

'The wise man is the one who walks with Jesus,  
the strong man knows he's weak without the Lord.  
And when you meet a man with a conscience clear & pure  
he's richer than all kings who have what money can afford'.

Now I know the man of real wisdom  
has realized that Jesus died for him.  
And if you want to meet the One with power  
just look for one who has the King within  
only just take time to look around you  
you'll find that history's lessons will not cease to remind you,  
that the real rich man is one whose heart is filled with love and peace

The wise man is the one who walks with Jesus,  
the strong man knows he's weak without the Lord.  
When you meet a man with a conscience clear & pure  
he's richer than all kings who have what money can afford.

My Prayer: "Father, Your Word proves that those who reverently feared You passed the test of life. I want that true knowledge that comes only from You."

## **PROGRAM 95 PAGE 2**

### **RELATIONSHIP VS. RELIGION: WHAT A DIFFERENCE!**

#### **PAGE 2 The Real Poor Man**

“Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, than great treasure with trouble.”  
Proverbs 15:16

It's splashed everywhere - ads that tantalize the senses that "more is better" and "still more is best." Words like "You deserve it!" and "You owe it to yourself!" cause even firm followers of Jesus to look over their shoulders to see if they are missing out on "the American dream," which is really the massing of material things.

But even as a young believer fresh out of the Marine Corps, I remember meeting some of the wealthier folk and catching the unhappiness in their eyes and the large amount of pills even in their desk drawers. That's why Norma and I are constantly challenged to simplify our lives with "Do we really need this?" And "What do we have that we don't need but someone else does?"

How much better to have less possessions and more priority time with the Lord - to offer our children less toys to entertain but more of our time just to train and love them. A wealthy man took his son to spend a couple of nights on a farm with what the rich man called "poor folks." On their return, he asked his son what he had learned. "I learned we have a pool that reaches our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls to protect us, but they have friends to protect them." The father was speechless. The son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

Do you have Jesus in your home? Is the Bible an honored friend and prayer a daily privilege? Does love fill each room? If so, consider yourself wealthy. Because you are!

My Prayer: "Keep my lifestyle simple and my love for You strong, my precious Lord Jesus."

## **PROGRAM 95 PAGE 3**

### **RELATIONSHIP VS. RELIGION: WHAT A DIFFERENCE!**

#### **PAGE 3 When Broken Is Better**

"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility."  
Proverbs 15:33

Once again we have the strongest theme of the Proverbs that is to be sought and embraced at any cost - the reverential fear of the Lord. For only our being swallowed up in God's greatness can self be cut down to the size of the Cross - where it is to remain dead. And only then can the Spirit of God truly use us for His purposes without our getting puffed up over honors that will be given us but are really meant for the One living within us.

God delights in using the humble vessel, because such a one will not glory in being used, but only glory in the Cross. But who is really humble? And what is the cost of humility? When we think we're at our "humble stage" we become proud of it. And the word "humble" is really a part of another word - "humiliation." In all truth, that has usually been God's way to bring about any humility in my own life. How do I take rebuke from people, whether such be just or unjust? How do I accept correction from others, whether they are 3 years old or 93 years old? Like when my daughter was three. She caught me not living what I preached and said, "Daddy, you're a hycopruck!" Though she couldn't pronounce the word, I knew what she meant and had to repent - before a three-year-old!

I can guarantee you that the more the Lord uses you, the more He will keep you broken. That's because those whom God calls us to help or bless will generally thank us. But we didn't do anything! God did it through us! And so while we say a gracious "Thank you" for any visible honors that come *our* way, we quickly pass them invisibly to the rightful owner who is *The Way*. "Before honour is humility," and the price of humility is suffering. Don't be surprised!

My Prayer: "I leave any honors up to You, my loving Father. Knit the humility of Jesus into the fabric of my life, though I know that will not be without pain."

## PROGRAM 95 PAGE 4

### RELATIONSHIP VS. RELIGION: WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

#### PAGE 4 It Just Had To Be Love!

“The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.” Isaiah 8:13

Here is another scripture that is not a suggestion but a three-fold command to sanctify, fear and hold the Lord in dreadful awe. The Amplified Bible says this: "The Lord of hosts, regard Him as holy and honor His holy name (by regarding Him as your only hope of safety), and let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread (lest you offend Him by your fear of man and distrust of Him)."

This verse, when seen in light of the terrible price Messiah paid for my sins, causes me, as the old song says, to "tremble, tremble, tremble!" We are to set apart the Lord alone - no substitutes for Him or additions to Him. *A total relationship!* He alone is to be our fear lest He lose that place in our hearts reserved only for God and we transfer that reservation to idols. *A total reverence!* He is to be held in awe-inspiring dread lest we fall into the trap of believing that God only cries over our disobedience rather than the truth that He often must crush it! *A total regard!* A poem I wrote leaves me no room for excuses:

"Why did He die for me? Why did He die for me?  
It had to be love, That's found only above;  
For Jesus to die for me.  
I can't understand, The whole thing's too grand,  
The Creator came down from above;  
To woo and to win this creature of sin,  
Quite simply, it just had to be love.  
The King on a cross, what a terrible cost,  
With a heart that was bursting with love;  
Forsaken, accursed, what more could be worse?  
Can't you see, it just had to be love!"

Jesus sanctified Himself - set aside His glory - to die for you and me. Now ours is the privilege to appreciate that sacrifice by setting our Lord apart from all lesser loves and being living sacrifices for Him.

My Prayer: "I willingly submit to your Lordship alone, my Jesus. Grant me grace to hold You in reverential fear and awe-inspiring dread."

## **PROGRAM 95 PAGE 5**

### **RELATIONSHIP VS. RELIGION: WHAT A DIFFERENCE!**

#### **PAGE 5 Build Your House On The Rock**

“Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of the LORD is His treasure.” Isaiah 33:6

The world's books contain the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of man and are limited in scope from the womb to the tomb. God's one Book contains the wisdom and knowledge of the Creator and offers unlimited light in the path from time to eternity. What a treasure we hold in the Bible and its 66 books of God's revelation to man. Here we find the greatest pearls of wisdom - what God intends us to be and to do - and here we find his keys of knowledge - how to use His wisdom to His glory.

As the end nears, the world grows more uncertain and unstable.

Man's own inventions often bring his most tormenting fears, as witnessed by the splitting of the atom. But the wisdom and knowledge that God gives to those who love Him lead to no regrets. Instead, these two spiritual virtues help conform us into Christ's own image by the strength of His salvation working in us. And stability is the result - that quiet confidence in the sovereignty of God no matter how dangerous or deluded the world becomes.

Let the return of the Lord be your hope and the fear of the Lord be your treasure. How can we know we truly fear (reverence) Him? 1) By a daily turning to Scripture for God's mind; 2) an awareness of what grieves and pleases the Holy Spirit; 3) a setting of priorities based on God's will; 4) an urgency to redeem the time in that which counts for eternity; and 5) a hatred and fear of allowing "self" on

the throne. This is what it means to build one's house on the Rock that will remain stable when castles shall come tumbling down.

My Prayer: "Thank You, my Father, for the anchor of Your Word. So cause me to grow in Your wisdom and knowledge that my greatest treasure will be to reverence You. Be my stability in an unstable world."