Balancing Knowledge and Love
Code: DN587

"If I . . . know all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).
Christians should never take knowledge for granted. The ability to learn of Christ and grow in His truth is a blessing beyond measure. Paul prayed that we would be "filled with the knowledge of [God's] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Col. 1:9). That's what enables us to live in a way that pleases God (v. 10).
But knowledge must be governed by love, just as love must be governed by knowledge. In Philippians 1:9 Paul says, "This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment." In 1 Corinthians 13:2 he says that knowledge without love is nothing. That's a God-ordained balance you must maintain if you want to be effective for the Lord.
In 1 Corinthians 13:2 Paul uses a hypothetical illustration to emphasize the importance of love: "If I . . . know all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but do not have love, I am nothing." The Greek word translated "mysteries" in that verse is used throughout the New Testament to speak of redemptive truth that once was hidden but now revealed. For example, Scripture speaks of the mystery of God in human flesh (Col. 2:2-3), of Christ's indwelling in us (Col. 1:26-27), and of the church as Christ's Body (Eph. 3:3-6, 9).
"Knowledge" in 1 Corinthians 13:2 refers to facts that can be ascertained by investigation. It's impossible to know every mystery and every fact in existence in the universe, but even if you did, without love your knowledge would be useless. Knowledge alone breeds arrogance, but love builds others up (1 Cor. 8:1).
Maintaining a balance of knowledge and love is a practical principle that influences the decisions you make every day. For example, if you have a choice between going to a Bible class or helping a neighbor with some immediate need, the better choice is to help your neighbor. You will have other opportunities to learn the Word, but it might be some time before you have a chance to show Christian love to your neighbor.

Suggestions for Prayer:

Ask God for the wisdom to keep knowledge and love in proper balance.

For Further Study:

Read Luke 10:25-37.

- How did the lawyer try to justify himself to Jesus?
- How did Jesus illustrate love for one's neighbor?

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