

*How Can You
Know God?*



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We read in 1st Chronicles 28:9-10 “As for you my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it.”

David is near the end of his life when he gives this great charge to his son Solomon. There were many who had positions of authority and responsibility in attendance. Princes, captains, rulers, military heroes, and some commoners had assembled to hear King David. He refers to them as “my brethren” or “my people.” He reminds them that it was originally his intention to build God’s house, but God would not allow it due to his

having been a man who fought many battles and spilled much blood. You can almost hear the pride in his voice as he tells the listeners that God is allowing the responsibility for building the sanctuary to remain in his lineage. 1st Chronicles 28:6, “It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son and I will be his Father.” Solomon’s kingdom was to be established forever, provided he was faithful to the Lord!

David begins this great charge by telling Solomon, “Know the God of your father.” He knew if Solomon was going to be able to do this great thing, that he must have a close relationship with God! David is not referring to “smarts” or “brains” as we might say. Nor, what we might refer to as “head knowledge.” No doubt Solomon already had that. He means a deep, abiding relationship. More than just an

put it across to others. These were traits he would build on.

Watson went back to IBM. With his new-found confidence, he eventually became chief executive of the corporation and took it into the computer age. In 15 years, he increased IBM's revenues almost tenfold.

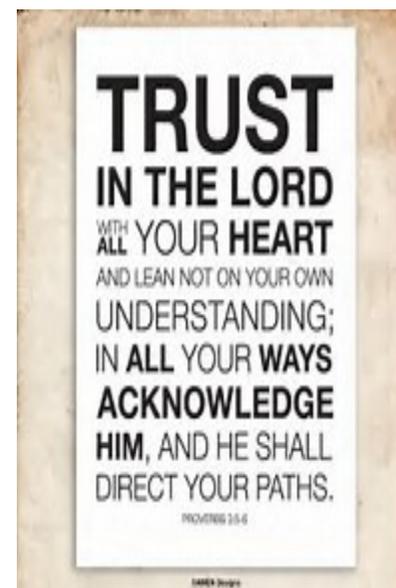
Confidence is a life ingredient that is essential to success and wholeness. It is perhaps the single most important trait that enables seemingly average people to do and become all that they can. And the good news is – it can be learned. No one has to suffer a lifetime of low confidence.

Have you heard about the little boy sitting on the bench at his team's baseball game? When asked by a concerned parent if he was discouraged that his team was behind 14 to nothing, he responded, "Discouraged? Why should I be discouraged? We haven't been up to bat yet!"

With confidence like that, it was going to be an exciting game.

-- Steve Goodier

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AIN'T NO HORSE CAN'T BE RODE

One grizzled westerner says, "Am not no horse can't be rode; ain't no cowboy can't be thrown." Problem is ... some people seem to be riding most of the time while others sit in the dirt discouraged.

Why is that? Why do some people seem to have an easier go of it than others? Why do some people seem to find their place while others never quite "get it together"? And why do many average and ordinary people accomplish extraordinary, or at least notable, things while others expect that they will never really amount to much?

There is not a single quick and simple answer to these questions. But I have discovered that there is one factor that is crucial, one thing that plays an indispensable role in whether we will spend more time riding the horse or sitting in the dirt. This factor is more basic than raw talent or hard work. It is more fundamental than one's background or intelligence. It has to do with the reasons why some people are able to compensate for poor backgrounds and others do not, why some intelligent people lead healthy and happy lives while other smart people flounder.

What is the one, single factor that makes the greatest difference whether one will lead the life they want or be disappointed again and again? In my experience, that factor is CONFIDENCE.

In his article "How 'Average' People Excel" (Reader's Digest, 1992), Alan Loy McGinnis tells about how Thomas J. Watson, Jr. learned to make good things happen in his life. Watson's father was founder and longtime head of IBM. But young Thomas was a lackluster student who even needed a tutor to get through the IBM sales school. He recalls that he had no distinctions and no successes.

Then he took flying lessons. What a feeling he experienced soaring above the clouds! He soon learned that he was good at flying – very good. He plowed everything into this "mad pursuit," as he fondly called it, and gained self-confidence. From that point on, his life took a significant turn.

Watson became an officer in the US Air Force during WWII. Though not brilliant, he discovered that he had an orderly mind and an unusual ability to focus on what was important and to

acquaintance. The kind of relationship that endures by loving and serving God the Father. Basically, what David is saying to his son is, "Let God have His way with you; let Him lead you."

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When you think about the great task Solomon has before him, I think we would all agree that he had better have a great relationship with God! What about you and me? I realize our daily tasks don't resemble what Solomon had before him, but still we had better have a sincere relationship with God! So, how well would you say you know God? Understand this one thing: God knows you and me well! That same charge David gave Solomon all those years ago should rule our lives every day as well. It is our duty to know God. God doesn't want us to just "know" about Him, or have "heard" about Him, but to truly know Him!

God must not become second place in our lives to anyone, or anything! What are some things that can become more important than God? It is by no means an

exhaustive list, but notice what we find in Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight, says the Lord." I suppose it's only natural that we become very proud of our earthly accomplishments. In return, we thank God for our abilities to earn degrees, support our families and the like, but does anything the Lord says through the Prophet Jeremiah ring true with us? He mentions wisdom,

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might, and riches. These, and other things we see as important, do not impress God in the least. God says what makes Him happy is one who, "understands and knows me." You cannot understand and know anyone unless you spend time with them, and that includes God!

Nothing should excite us more

than getting to spend time with God by studying His word, offering up prayers, and worshipping Him. Our relationship with Him must be one that grows more precious by the day! By the time King David gives this charge to his son Solomon, he has lived a long life that was far from perfect. While encouraging him to “know God,” he can look back at his own life and see mistakes made at times that he wasn’t as close to God as he should have been. You need only to read some of David’s Psalms, and it becomes obvious how his walk with God had grown more precious as the years went by.

In Psalm 63:1-8 David speaks of a kind of thirst like no other; one that can only be quenched by God Himself. He says he thinks of God every hour of the day and night. He says, “I rejoice in the shadow of your wings.” He concludes verse 8 by saying, “Your right hand upholds me.” In Isaiah 26:9 the Prophet says, “With my soul I have desired you in the night; yes, by my spirit within me I will seek you early.” In His sermon on the mount Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”

In no generation, has God ever been pleased when His people

don’t know Him. In Hosea 4:6, God said, “My people are destroyed from a lack of knowledge.” How much easier do all the struggles become knowing we can conquer anything because of our relationship with God? If you want an example of what can happen in a society that turns it’s back on God, just read Romans 1:18-28. Does the picture Paul’s words paint for us seem familiar? This lifestyle Paul speaks of is all too common

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in today’s world, and in God’s eyes it is just as shameful now as it was then! In verse 28, Paul says these are some who, “Did not like to retain God in their knowledge.”

We must “know God” and serve Him faithfully, and to do so we must seek Him. When we truly seek Him, we have this precious promise: “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with your whole heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). In

Holy One.

The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy. Some things in that book have already been fulfilled, but others still await. Here is one prophecy we will personally witness being fulfilled: “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books” (Revelation 20:12).

It's hard nowadays to know when someone might be recording our actions. That small cell phone the fellow over there is holding might be capturing my deeds for the world to see. But that's not the most serious possibility. God is watching. And those who think they can flaunt His will with impunity are in for a rude awakening!

Timothy D Hall
Hemlines
03/27/2008

SIN RESULTS IN DEATH

When you were **slaves of sin** you were not under obligation to righteousness, but what were the fruits of those actions of which you are now ashamed? The result of all that was **death**.
-Romans 6:20-21

reputation. Former Governor Eliot Spitzer of New York undoubtedly considered his occasional "indiscretions" a private matter. But when reports recently came to public light, his "little folly" quickly ousted him from present and future public office.

Moses once faced a challenge. Two of the tribes of Israel wanted to settle short of the Promised Land. The thought of them abandoning the mission prematurely alarmed the man of God. After they promised to continue with the mission after settling their families, Moses warned them: "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

Be sure - your sin will find you out. Those are sobering words for anyone who attempts to conceal their actions.

Be sure - your sin will find you out. Those are sobering words for anyone who attempts to conceal their actions. Many have discovered how true they are. Employees have been caught embezzling company funds;

doctors have been discovered tucking narcotics into their lab coats; spouses have been caught on tape entering a hotel with a coworker. Each of these thought they had found the perfect way to hide their sins, but it all came out in the end.

Are we saying that everyone who has ever committed an indiscretion will be exposed? No, we know better than that. For everyone whose deeds have been brought to light there are likely many others who have kept their secrets under wraps. But does that mean Moses was wrong? That their sins will not find them out?

The Bible is true. All sins will eventually be uncovered. Man may not see all things, but there is One who does: "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13). You know, of course, of whom that is speaking: God.

Adam and Eve were the first to try to cover up their sin. When they heard the Lord approaching in the garden, they attempted to evade His detection. But they could not hide from God (read about it in Genesis 3). Neither will we be able to deceive the

James 4:8, we are told, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Are you making a serious effort to "Know God?" Do you strive daily to find Him, and do His will? We must realize that life can, as they say, "throw us a curve-ball." We may suddenly encounter troubles we never thought possible! How much easier do all the struggles become knowing we can conquer anything because of our relationship with God? God speaking through Isaiah tells us, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen you, yes, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."

"Whatever your life may bring, whether you see it as good or bad, it is filtered through My Father's fingers. He has known about it since the beginning of time."

Each time I read the crucifixion account in John 19, I picture Jesus as He looked down at Mary, His mother, and the Apostle John or, as the scripture calls him, "the disciple He

loved." I also like to envision Him looking directly at me and saying, "Whatever your life may bring, whether you see it as good or bad, it is filtered through My Father's fingers. He has known about it since the beginning of time. Remember, I will never leave you nor forsake you!"

It is my sincere hope that all who read this can honestly say, "I know God, and serving Him is the greatest joy I have." If that is not the case, you can change that today!

Tom Bennett
Spearsville, LA

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:37-39

A Youtube World

Does the name "George Allen" ring a bell with you? Given slightly different circumstances, you might say, "Of course, he's the Republican nominee for President." Just two years ago the former Senator from Virginia was considered one of the strong candidates for the Republican nomination. His record as Congressman, Governor and Senator showed he was just the person the conservative base was looking for.

All of that changed, however, in August of 2006. While speaking to a small crowd in Southwestern Virginia, Allen was captured on video making derogatory remarks toward the man behind the camera, remarks that were considered racial slurs. The video quickly made its way to a web site called "YouTube", and there captured the attention of the nation. It was the beginning of an abrupt end to a spectacular political career.

Have you ever seen the inside of a prison in the Philippines? Would it surprise you to know that millions of Americans have? In July of 2007, a four-minute video was posted on YouTube showing hundreds of prisoners dressed in bright orange prison-issue jumpsuits

dancing to Michael Jackson's "Thriller". Who would ever have predicted that such a production would become a phenomenon? But it did, thanks to this web site.

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YouTube, for those who may not be aware, is a web site where anyone can upload video to share with anyone in the world. Deepak Thomas and Vineet Buch published a study in March of 2007 giving statistics for the "fastest growing website in Internet history". On average, they reported, 100 million videos are streamed daily, and every day 65,000 new video clips are uploaded. More than 13 million different viewers visit YouTube each month, and the average viewing time is 30 minutes. Only 20% to 30% of viewers are from the U.S., making this an international sensation.

Law enforcement has taken note of the widespread appeal of YouTube. The police depart-

ment of Johnson City, Tennessee, the place I call home, posted their "Dirty Dozen" of most wanted criminals a few weeks ago. Within days most of them had either turned themselves in or had been apprehended, as a result of a viewer's tip. Other police departments in nearby communities have followed suit.

South Carolina's entry in the 2007 Miss Teen USA pageant was asked a question during the competition. Her answer struck many as high comedy, though she clearly was giving it her best effort. The numbers in attendance at that pageant were probably not large, but the video of her answer has been watched again and again by millions. The power of YouTube was once more demonstrated.

We're no longer dealing with the World Wide Web; it's now Web 2.0, according to Tim O'Reilly. O'Reilly, in September 2005, coined "Web 2.0" to refer to the enhanced use of the Internet as a platform for business and social purposes. In addition to YouTube, there are now numerous other video sites. For social networking, there is FaceBook and MySpace. Music lovers now turn to iTunes and similar ventures. If anyone doubted that the Internet would catch on, they only need to consider the num-

bers behind services such as these.

Knowing that it's a YouTube world in which we live, public figures must now be on guard. What they think they are doing in private may one day be shown to all the world. But care in how we live our lives was a good idea long before computers or the Internet.

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The writer of Ecclesiastes once made this observation: "Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, and cause it to give off a foul odor; so does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor" (Ecclesiastes 10:1). The "perfumer's ointment" refers to an expensive concoction of spices and oils, something a woman might wear on a special evening out. But once a dead fly is spotted in that bottle of high-priced perfume, who wants to use it? It's good for nothing and thrown away. Just a tiny insect - but its impact is great.

What was the point of this story about perfume? To show that "a little folly" can ruin a person's