

# DISCIPLES and what they know

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This brief article is about **disciples**—in Greek, **mathetes**, literally, *those doing the math*... so, a certain kind of student questioning, putting it together piece by piece: 1 + 1 + 1, right? So it's about learning; it is about acquiring knowledge... about knowing; it is the motive for the littlest to ask: Why? Children want answers.

What is knowledge? **Knowledge** is the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association. To know something is to perceive directly, to recognize as being the same as something previously known; to be aware of its truth or its factuality. To know, allows us to act.

Acquiring knowledge, we are able to eliminate hesitation and doubt.

Early on in life, we recognize all over the world there is a moral law—a strong desire to act a certain way... already at work in our individual lives, observable when a little child 2 years old... repeatedly says: mommy / daddy, don't look, as the child has cookie crumbs all over their hands and face; or even as they make a muddy mess "playing" in the garden.

We adults know this law of nature which we endlessly break... when we always excuse our bad temper due to being tired... or due to worrying about something... or 1,000 other excuses... though curiously, we never make an excuse for our good behavior, we always attribute our good temper to our real selves—that is me, and the other isn't?!

In his book *Mere Christianity*, ©1945, C.S. Lewis suggests: when you hear a cry for help from someone in danger, you will probably feel two desires: one a desire to help, the other a desire to keep out of danger. In addition you will find inside you a third thing that judges between the two impulses, which tells you that you ought to follow the impulse to help, and suppress the impulse to run away. It is the thing that tells you, "your herd instinct is asleep, wake it up!" The moral law, the law of nature... is like the multiplication tables... something that no primitive human—mother or father invented; mathematics is not like our human conventions to drive on the right side or left side of the street – the rightness or wrongness which may change depending on the city where we are driving.

The moral law is like a tune played on a piano. The tune can be: goodness, right conduct, courage in battle, safety in conflict... and 10,000 other tunes. The human instincts are merely the keys on the piano. The keys are neither right nor wrong; they are just there. It is incorrect to think that some instincts are always good; while others are always bad. At one time or other an instinct, urge, feeling or emotion is appropriate and right; at another time, the same feeling can be inappropriate and wrong.

Different feelings and instincts exist: to love, to hate, to speak out, to remain silent; to compete, to be joyful, to be sad; to run toward the conflict, to run from the conflict; to eat, to drink – water... or wine... or whiskey; to be serious, to be goofy, to be passionate, to take a risk, to gamble, to have sex, to be cowardice, to be courageous, to help another, to assist and even save another at your own peril... and many more feelings, urges and emotions. Every key is right at one time and wrong at another.



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**So, which key or keys do we play?** Daily we weigh our competing feelings. There is a time to stir up our instincts; there is a time to suppress them. As a great practical consequence, the most dangerous thing we can do is to thoughtlessly take any one impulse in our nature... and set it up to follow at all cost. There is not one of our unruly feelings, not one of our impulses that will not make us pure evil... if we allow it to be our absolute guide.

The battle is always between faith and reason on one side and our thoughts and emotions on the other. This rebellion of unruly emotions and disruptive moods against our self is going to come... which is why we teach our moods where they stop and get off; or you remain a vacillating individual, unstable and wobbly.

Acquiring knowledge helps us eliminate uncertainty, hesitation and doubt.

It is why people go to school. We want our surgeons to do their work with knowledge, right? We expect our bankers with their knowledge will protect our \$\$\$\$. We hope the airplane pilot knows not only how to take off, but also how to land. We hope they all passed their classes with more than a D or C... or even a B.

And all kids know you can't have good students without a good teacher; so, who is supposed to bring the knowledge that will answer the great questions?

In the church **Jesus** said He is building... Who is to teach? Well, He answered that question: **I will build My church**... I will put it together piece by piece... student by student; and His students came to learn what He knew, to think His thoughts. He spoke with authority, and not like any teachers in their centers of learning. His students acquired the knowledge that belongs to Christ; they heard what lessons He taught; they saw all the marvelous deeds He did; they touched Him, they sat at table and laughed with Him; definitely, they got to know Him. And because of what they knew, they willingly gave their lives for Him.

Dr. Dallas Willard, our USC philosophy professor in his book *Knowing Christ Today* said, In any subject matter, the responsibility to teach falls on those who have the corresponding knowledge. If you have knowledge on matters which are of great importance to others, it is your duty to make that knowledge available to them. If the house is on fire, you must share your knowledge; if you know where the best bargains are, you always tell your friends.

If you are called as a witness in court, what you passionately believe... or have strong feelings for... will be of no use. Be certain, the witness is expected to know something and not withhold information, but to make that knowledge available for others to rightly discern and confidently act upon.

By many examples, **Jesus**, **the good Pastor** spoke. To a highly educated man with many questions, fears and doubts, He said: *We speak of what we know, and witness of what we have seen*—**John 3:18**.

Therein is the pattern of students of the **Lord**; the task of witnesses of Christ; it is to know Christ, and in knowing Him and knowing what He knows, to make the knowledge of God available to those around them. His students were told... without repeating after anybody; without holding one budget committee meeting: *Go, teach the nations / help students doing their math... patiently help those putting together all the pieces... teaching them to observe / to guard to protect* **all that I commanded**—**Matthew 28**.

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Remember: this is **Jesus, the Christ**, not Moses; and certainly not an angry Pharisee, or envious chief priest. All Jesus commanded distilled into 2 commands:

1. *Love God our Father above all others*; and...
2. *Love one another as He loved us*. Not terribly complicated, is it?

## So, what is love?

Well, quite frankly, it is not having sex... dogs and cats and crocodiles and polar bears and lizards and whales and orangutans can do that... and it is not eating ice cream... or gobbling any other favorite food. **Love** is not really defined anywhere in scripture, but its meaning is discernible in what the good Teacher first taught His students: *Love one another, as I have loved you*. We see the love of God, on the first page of the bible... when we consider all He created was abundant, and full of variety; and very, very good; intended for all those who would come from Adam... intended for those who would be... *made in the image and likeness* of God. He had no plans to eat one apple from a tree, or one carrot from the Garden. All His meticulous work however long it took... was done to secure the benefit and wellbeing of others. Now, **that is love**!

To the church in Philadelphia—to the church in Brotherly Love... the Lord said, *I know you are weak, but you have kept My word*—so in Philadelphia, they gladly did what the Teacher said, and they told what He endured for us... when He came to pay the terrible debt we could not pay!

Philadelphia declared the words of the Teacher for others to hear... and since they did what He asked them to do... and they did what the other churches of Revelation did **not** do; then the Teacher added a bonus: *...because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you from the terrible test that will come on the whole world... to test them that dwell on the earth.*

## Wow! That also is **love**!

So it makes a lot of sense why the Book of Hebrews begins: *God spoke in times past in bits and pieces through the prophets, but in these last days spoke to us through His Son*... the Word of God, the Wisdom of God; the good Pastor... the Door, the Way, the Truth, the Life... and 10,000 other appellations. It really begs the question, since **Jesus, the Christ**, the Messiah sent from God, the Lord of glory whom all eternity adores... since He is all that...

## is there really something He forgot to tell us?

John, the disciple whom Jesus loved; a student teaching the next generation of students, he penned for us many details about the good Teacher, John wrote: *What was from the beginning, what we heard, what we saw with our own eyes... This is the message we heard from Him... and declare to you.*

*And hereby we do **know** that we **know** Him, if we keep His commands.*