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Not in Device nor Creed — P3

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (Romans 11:33)

Christians everywhere live under doctrines, denominations, and teachings that they consider to be the “true” knowledge of God. The problem is each individual or group claims they alone have the true knowledge of God, and this causes divisions. Who is right?

Paul was unparalleled in his understanding of the Scriptures, his intellectual prowess, and his divine revelations from God. If anyone had a monopoly on the true knowledge of God, you’d think it would have been Paul, yet he said, *“we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known”* (1 Cor. 13:9-12).

The “part” that we know is the revelation of God through His Word. While this is by no means a complete picture of God, Heaven, the purpose of life, etc, it is the only Truth God has given us, and it is sufficient for *“life and godliness”* (2 Pt. 1:3b) and eternal salvation. We will not fully “know” until we are in the presence of Christ. Paul is saying that in this life, all our understanding of God is like the limited understanding of a young child. A child does not understand his parents’ ways or why they do what they do, but despite this, children are to live in their parent’s “revelation” of what is good and bad, safe and unsafe, right and wrong. Regardless of whether they understand, they are to obey and

walk in the way proscribed. If a young child thinks he knows his parents’ thoughts and intentions, beyond their revelation to him, he is merely speculating and is most likely in error. And if he leads his siblings to obey his knowledge of the “truth,” he will most likely lead them astray. We’ve all heard children invent the “real meaning” behind their parent’s words and actions—some of it well-intentioned and some not, but almost always wrong.

Regardless of the motives, Paul considered such behavior both ignorant and foolish, warning Timothy to *“refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels”* (2 Tim. 2:23). We must guard against “divining” knowledge or extrapolating doctrines as the “real” will of God. As Jesus told the Pharisees, *“You yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition”* (Matt. 15:3b). In their good intentions, the Pharisees had added precept upon precept to God’s Word, until they had created an exhaustive “knowledge” of God’s purposes, where they felt knowledge was lacking. They arrogantly believed that they understood the purposes of God and could therefore “speak for Him” where they felt he didn’t explain enough of Himself. In the end, they *“invalidated the word of God”* (Matt. 15:6b). They had no “fear” of God—*“the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments”* (Ps. 111:10a). Without a healthy respect for parents, children will usurp their authority—speaking and acting for them in disobedient speculations and arrogance.

We need to be children who fear our Heavenly Father and live by the revelation He has given us—The Word of God—claiming no other device or creed as the “true” knowledge of God. May we seek His face in reverence and wait on His Spirit to give us understanding in His timing as we mature. Even so, Amen.

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