



June 5, 2005

Know How

My little girl and I planted a garden today for the first time. As I was growing up my Dad had the family busy getting the garden ready, laying off rows, planting and then weeding and caring for the garden over the summer. When the vegetables were ready there was picking, canning and giving the surplus to others. Now as I prepared my own garden I thought back to those days trying to remember what to do, and more importantly, how to do it. Surprisingly, I remembered enough to get some things in the ground and, with some rain, sunshine and the mechanisms that God has put in place, we will have something later in the season. The point of all this is that I did not really know what to do. I realized that for years we were told what to do without the benefit of knowing why. My Dad spent the time reading and learning how to grow things, as well as relying on his upbringing on a farm, so he knew what had to be done and the reason for doing it. I suddenly became aware that I did not have this knowledge. I had not read as extensively, nor did I have the experience of years of growing my own garden. There were many things that were thought out for me without the benefit of understanding.

The same is true of the Church and God's word. We may sit in the services for many years and let others who have studied and applied themselves to learning the scriptures speak to us. Our knowledge of the scriptures is probably good enough to recognize whether or not the things that are being taught are accurate. A problem may arise when we embark on teaching someone ourselves. It is possible that we find ourselves at a loss as to remember the passages that have been quoted in our hearing but suddenly we may be confused, not understanding precisely what scripture to use and when it is appropriate to do so. The problem is that we may be allowing someone else to do our studying for us.

Paul encouraged Timothy, "*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*" (1 Tim 4.13). It is important for us to realize that while others may teach and preach publicly, we have a responsibility to continue this outside of formal Bible Studies and worship services. Personal reading and study is the key to be able to answer questions that may arise when opportunities to teach present themselves. The writer of Hebrews states that we must come of full age and learn to discern between good and evil (Heb 5.14). The writer states that this is the result of using those things that we have studied. This is a personal responsibility that we have, and it is in our best interest to do so.

Preparation, by means of personal reading, study and meditation on the word of God, gives us the knowledge from which we can then gain the necessary experience in teaching others. This will also lead to a level of confidence in the knowledge that we have so that we can lead others to Christ. Planting the seed is what we need to be doing. We can apply the same principles used in gardening to teaching the lost. If the seed never gets planted it cannot grow. We may know some accomplished gardeners but their knowledge and experience is not ours. We must gain this on our own by tending our own garden, or, in this case, teaching when we have the opportunity. "*Is the seed yet in the barn ?*" (Hag 2.19). If we never learn to plant we will never have a harvest.

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