

Learning Wasn't Easy

Learning wasn't easy for me. It may have been that I was never able to sit still, to listen well or to get my work done on time. I laughed and played my way through school, hiding the one legged A's on returned papers, suffering the humiliation of being chosen last for spelling bees and sitting through parent teacher conferences where the thread of conversation was always, "He's such a nice boy. What are we going to do with him?" I was an educational challenge for teachers trained to help young boys get good grades. I remember one such teacher who flunked me the first quarter, flunked me the second quarter and gave me a D- for the semester just so he could keep me in his class. Much to his disappointment, I dropped the class just after I got my D-. I wonder if he felt that he failed.

There are many ways to learn. You can learn by watching others, reading, experiencing, paddling, humiliation, repetition, consequence, instinct or even by listening. Now there is a mystery I didn't learn very early in life - listening. I think my school teachers tried them all. I know my parents did. Eventually, after crawling out of High School with a D+ GPA, God came to my rescue. Under a bridge near the Columbia River in Kennewick Washington, I turned my life over to Jesus. I prayed a simple but direct prayer. "Jesus, if you are who I have heard you to be, come into my life." I became a living Christian. I became alive to learning. Jesus changed my life and set my course to become what I am today. By His Spirit in me, I entered college, learned to study, received As and Bs in all my classes and discovered who God knew me to be all the time. I discovered who I am.

Of all the knowledge and wisdom available through all the teachers or experiences of this world, knowing God and knowing one's self are hands down the most important. Knowing God personally connects you with the designs in place before you were conceived and the future beyond your present knowledge. Knowing yourself gives opportunity for dormant gifts and talents to be released for the benefit of others and the pleasure of yourself.

During the last week of His life on earth (read John 12-17), Jesus spoke to the foundation of learning. He said, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well" (14:7). Opening a door not yet understood, Jesus invited His followers, and people yet to be born, to look deeply into His life. Jesus knew that He was "the way, the truth, the life". He knew no one could come to the Father, the Almighty; no one could know their Creator, except through Him" (14:6). Knowing Jesus is knowing God. When you know God, He will reveal who you are, who He created you to be. Your future will be made known to you.

May I say, by way of experience, that your past does not determine your future? I was a failure in almost everything I did up through my High School years. Jesus came and erased the results of my past. Jesus came with plans for a very good future. I've learned and experienced. It's available for you. Learn Jesus.

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