

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
October 25, 2016

Daniel 1:1–2:16. Knowledge, an enemy of faith?

1 Thessalonians 2:1–3:5. Living to please the Lord.

Job 40:3–12. Surrendering to God is not enough.

COMMENTS.

Daniel 1:1–2:16. Outline: Daniel and his friends remain faithful (**1:1-21**); Daniel and his friends refuse unclean food (**1:8-16**); God rewards Daniel and his friends (**1:17-21**); the king seek a dream interpreter (**2:1-16**).

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. One of the most pernicious influences of modernity in contemporary Christianity is anti-intellectualism. It not only tends to pit secular knowledge against the spiritual life, it even goes as far as to pit knowledge against faith. Unfortunately, this leads to fideism, an empty mind and life with reference to God and the spiritual life, as well as many heretical ideas about God—for without robust thinking of God the believer will refashion God into his own image and purposes, hardly a God worth worshipping and conforming oneself to. Consider Daniel and his three friends. What studies did these young men pursue? Surely they were taught the religion of Babylon as well as the system of astrology that formed the basis for both their religion and their science. The king’s official counselors had to be able to interpret dreams and various omens, because understanding the times and knowing the future were both important to the king’s success. The young men were given what we would call a “secular education” steeped in the superstition of that day. But should the people of God learn “the wisdom of this world” when they have the inspired and infallible Word of God to instruct them? Some believers think that all “worldly education” is sinful, while others, just as sincere, believe that God’s people should understand the mind-set of the world but not be controlled by it. Consider Moses who “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22), and the Apostle Paul, who read the classics and even quoted from them in his letters. In 1 Corinthians 15:33 he quoted the Greek poet Menander; in Acts 17:27 and 28, he quoted Epimenides, Aratus, and Cleanthes; and in Titus 1:12, he quoted Epimenides. In 2 Timothy 4:13, he asked Timothy to bring him his books and parchments, which were probably copies of some of the Old Testament Scriptures and possibly some of the classical writers. The point is that Paul knew the classics and sought to use what he knew to reach people with the truth of God’s Word. The reason Daniel and his friends, and Moses, and Paul did so well with their secular education is because of their love for the Lord. They walked with the Lord *by knowledge and by love*. They understood the main thing in life: personally knowing and loving God. When we understand the main thing in life, all other things are simply means of sustaining us for knowing and loving God, secular or otherwise. Let us not forget the distinction between the means of life and the goal of life, lest we lose track of the wonderful gift of life God has blessed us with and the future that awaits us.

1 Thessalonians 2:1–3:5. Outline: Paul’s defense of his ministry (2:1-9); Paul’s true motivations (2:10-16), and Paul’s deep feelings for the Thessalonians (2:17-3:5).

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. Walking with God in 2nd person knowledge and love is very freeing. Instead of living for the approbation of man or desperately trying to control the circumstance of life, we live for the Lord. We live to please Him as per 2:4 in this reading. As with any deep and close relationship, it takes time to develop a real intimacy with the Lord. This is accomplished daily. Every day is to be a day of greater intimacy with the Lord as we travel on this journey called life: “Not as pleasing men, but God who tries our hearts” (1 Thess. 2:4). The fact that we can talk to the Lord Jesus Christ directly and thank Him for His sacrifice, grace and personal blessings (1 Tim. 1:12) transfers us into a second person relationship with Christ that no first person or second person relationship could ever obtain.

Job 40:3–12. In this reading, Job replies to God (40:3-5). Seeing that man is not the world’s master, and that God controls and cares for His creation, Job acknowledged (a) his insignificance and (b) his inability to defend himself further. His former self-confidence now was changed to humble submission. Never again would Job approach God like a stately prince (31:37). Job admitted that he could not respond to God, as God had challenged him to do (38:3; 40:2). His only response was silence—“I put my hand over my mouth”—a gesture he had suggested for his friends. However, this response of the former plaintiff included no note of repentance. He was humbled, but not yet repentant, so God summoned him to answer more questions.

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. Oftentimes when we are suffering and are humbled by the difficulties we *think* that we finally get it: “God is in control and I can’t do anything about it.” However, often it takes more to get our attention. This is the case with Job. He was humbled but not to the point of changing his entire viewpoint toward God. There are a lot of people who are humbled by their difficulties but never make a radical move to a relationship with God *by knowledge and by love*. They might throw up their hands, or in Job’s case put his hand over his mouth, in surrender. But surrendering to the power of God and acknowledging one’s own weakness is a far cry from drawing to Him by proper knowledge and love that seeks Him as the greatest good that He is.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don