

HEAD VERSUS HEART

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We've been talking the last few weeks about the heart (hard-heart).

This topic might also partly answer some confusion we occasionally have.

For instance ... we've mentioned before ... the story of George Müller — the "Apostle of Faith".

He set up and ran orphanages for thousands of children through the 1800's in Bristol. For almost 70 years.

He built homes ... fed ... clothed ... educated them. He gave away 1.5 million New Testaments. About ¼ million Old Testaments.

And ... he NEVER asked for a single penny.

His biography tells of many dramatic miracles — all in answer to prayer.

A challenge to many of us: George Müller was a Sunday-keeper. He believed in the Trinity ... going to heaven ... eternal hell-fire ... Christmas and Easter ... etc.

All these false doctrines ... yet God answered thousands of his prayers — specifically.

Yet — some in the Churches of God — keep the Sabbath ... the Holy Days ... avoid unclean meats. They await Jesus' return — know so many true doctrines — yet rarely see an answer to prayer.

How could God answer George Müller's prayers ... when he had so much false doctrine?

I believe the answer — at least in part — is because of the difference between having head knowledge ... and having a faithful heart.

Today ... I want to look at "Head vs Heart".

Clarify a misconception some might have.

Sometimes it crops up with healing. “How could God heal so-and-so — who attends a Sunday church — but not sister thus-and-such who’s been keeping the Sabbath for 30 years and even arranges flowers for the Holy Day services?” That does confuse people.

We should realise that head knowledge has its place and is important. But it’s not primarily what God is looking for in us.

We can see knowledge is important as follows:

2 Peter 3:17-18

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

18 **but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

We are to grow in the knowledge — of Jesus Christ. Grow in the knowledge of the Truth. It is important.

2 Peter 1:2-5

2 **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,**

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, **through the knowledge of Him** who called us by glory and virtue,

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 **But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,**

Knowledge ... though of Jesus Christ. Not just knowledge generally.

Yet.

1 Corinthians 8:1

1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up**, but **love edifies**.

Knowledge puffs up. It can lead to pride. "I know so much more than these other 'peasants'".

1 Corinthians 8:1 (NASB)

1 **Knowledge makes arrogant**, but **love edifies**.

1 Corinthians 13:1-2

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And **though I have** the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and **all knowledge**, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Possessing all knowledge — without love — is nothing.

We might study history ... Bible history ... Egypt ... Assyria ... Babylon ... Bible languages ... Church history ... creation ... intelligent design ... Jewish history ... prophecy ... types and anti-types ... thousands of books ... be able to explain every Church of God doctrine.

Would that impress God? He knows all of that and more!

And may lead us into feeling superior?

Or thinking: God will answer my prayers because I'm so knowledgeable.

There is nothing wrong with right knowledge. Right knowledge can lead to right believing ... to right actions ... to good outcomes.

But knowledge alone has its limitations.

Many people possess the knowledge that smoking is harmful ... but still smoke.



Most Christians possess knowledge that sin harmful — but still sin.

Also ... how much knowledge do you need to please God? How many true doctrines would you need to have to please God?

One ... five ... fifty? Must you possess full knowledge on Church history in 100–250 AD? Full knowledge of Hebrew verbs ... Aorist tense in Greek ... how to explain every apparent contradiction in scripture ... perfect understanding of the Olivet Prophecy or the Book of Revelation — beast and mountains and horns and hills?

How much knowledge is God looking for?

If you know twice as much as another Church member ... is that twice as pleasing? If you know twice as much as you knew 20 years ago ... twice as pleasing?

What if you're not very good at acquiring complex technical Biblical knowledge? Must an elderly widow lady possess full knowledge of the workings of the Hebrew Calendar — molads ... conjunctions ... postponements ... intercalary years etc — to please God?

The reality is that none of us can know everything about the Bible ... Church history ... prophecy ... Bible languages. No matter how much knowledge we gain ... we're still ignorant in many areas.

What's more important to God is the heart!

I suspect this is an area where George Müller (and no doubt others) excelled. They may have misunderstood many key doctrines — but had faithful and committed hearts.

If we give God our hearts ... we're in a great place. Knowledge is icing on the cake.

Psalms 119:9-11

9 How can a young man cleanse his way?

By taking heed according to Your word.

10 **With my whole heart I have sought You;**

Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

11 **Your word I have hidden in my heart,**

That I might not sin against You.

“With my whole heart I have sought you” — not “I have hidden your Word in my head”!

Psalms 119:33-36

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,
And I shall keep it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,
For I delight in it.

36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to covetousness.

God is looking for those who love His laws and ways ... WHOLE-HEARTED ... not merely possessing knowledge.

Psalms 101:1-2

1 I will sing of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.
2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way.
Oh, when will You come to me?

I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

Walk with a perfect heart. A loyal heart. A heart of integrity.

So. God is looking for someone who has a right heart before Him.

2 Chronicles 16:7-10

7 And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him:
“Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD
your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand.

8 Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots
and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into
your hand.

9 **For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole
earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is
loyal to Him.**

In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall
have wars.”

10 Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

God's eyes are looking for those who have a faithful heart (KJV:perfect).

God can easily add knowledge. He can't always find a good heart.

2 Kings 20:1-6

1 **In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death.** And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.' "

2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying,

3 **"Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight."** And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: **"I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you.** On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

6 And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David." ' "

Hezekiah could say he'd walked with a perfect (KJV) heart.

How about you and I? Could we pray this prayer. Can we say what Hezekiah said?

Note: Hezekiah wouldn't have possessed a fraction of the Bible knowledge that you and I have.

Psalms 139:1-6

1 **O LORD, You have searched me and known me.**

2 You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.

3 You comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
5 You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain it.

Psalms 139:23-24

23 **Search me, O God, and know my heart;**
Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Search my heart. Could we say that?

Not “search my I.Q.” ... or “search my knowledge of the Beasts of Daniel 7”.

Psalms 24:3-5

3 **Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?**
Or who may stand in His holy place? (Who is going to be in God’s Kingdom?)
4 **He who has** clean hands and **a pure heart,**
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

“He who has a pure heart”.

We wouldn’t need to pass a Bible Knowledge Quiz to enter the Holy Place.

Matthew 5:1-10

1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.
2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:
3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.

8 **Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.**

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 8 says "Blessed are the pure in heart". There is nothing in these verses about "Blessed are those who are very knowledgeable".

Mark 7:1-9

1 **Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem.**

2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

6 **He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites,** as it is written:

This people honours Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

7 And **in vain they worship Me,**

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

8 **For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men**—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, **"All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.**

The scribes and Pharisees possessed knowledge. They paid lip service to God — words ... talk talk talk! But ... their hearts were far from God.

It was not what God was looking for — then or now! He is looking for people with a perfect heart.

1 Samuel 16:1-7

1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. **For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.**”

2 And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.”

But the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’

3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you.”

4 So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, “Do you come peaceably?”

5 And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before Him!”

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “**Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**”

GOD LOOKS AT THE HEART.

1 Samuel 16:11-14

11 And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.”

And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.”

12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, “**Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!**”

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; **and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.**

So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. *(This is the first time that David’s name is mentioned in the Bible ... and after this ... it appears over 1,100 times)*

14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.

David was anointed King. How much knowledge did he have? Some — but far less than you or me?

But **he had a great heart!**

Knowledge is important. We should seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of God and His ways.

But the heart is of primary importance. A loyal heart ... with only a little knowledge ... is better than having great knowledge with a perverse heart.

I don't know George Mueller personally ... but he seems to have been reverent ... dedicated ... served God whole-heartedly. I'd speculate that this counted with God — even if Mr Mueller had some incorrect beliefs. I'm sure he worshipped God whole-heartedly.

“You can be right in your heart ... even though you are wrong in your head”.

Proverbs 4:18-23

18 **But the path of the just is like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.**

19 The way of the wicked is like darkness;
They do not know what makes them stumble.

20 **My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.**

21 **Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;**

22 **For they are life to those who find them,
And health to all their flesh.**

23 **Keep your heart with all diligence,** (*Guard your heart with all diligence*)

For out of it spring the issues of life.

You don't want a hard-heart. Receive God's instructions. Value them.

Delight and meditate in God's Word — Psalm 1.

Above all — watch over your heart. Guard your heart!

A good heart is more important than knowledge. But — seek both!

