



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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January 20, 2013

JUMP START #531

Proverbs 19:2 *“Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who hurries his footsteps errs.”*

This passage brings together two valuable ideas. First, the importance of knowledge. It is not good for a person to be without knowledge. Most would agree. Knowledge empowers. Knowledge opens doors. The lack of knowledge creates fear and limits what a person can do. Put a grandma on a couch with her teenaged grandson and toss in a cell phone. Often, grandma is frustrated because she doesn't know how to text, take a picture or change ring tones. Hand the phone over to her grandson and he has that thing running as smooth as can be in seconds. Grandma is amazed. Her lack of understanding about electronics makes her afraid to push buttons. The grandson understands the symbols, knows the language and is at ease.

The knowledge Solomon has in mind isn't so much mathematics, biology, foreign languages or, even cell phones, as it is God's word. Walking through this life without knowledge of God is walking with a blind fold on. A person will never discover their reason for being here until they open the Bible. A knowledge of God's word brings confidence, trust and hope to us.

The second expression in our passage, “and he who hurries his footsteps errs,” reminds us that acquiring knowledge takes time. Those in a hurry will make mistakes-that's the intended thought. There are no short cuts to learning God's word.

We live in “hurried” times. Have you noticed? Everyone seems to be in a hurry. The commercials on TV never advertise how to slow your computer down, it's how to speed it up. Faster downloads, faster phone service, fast foods, drive through tellers, express lanes at the check out, pizza in 30 minutes or it's free-about the only thing that's not fast these days are sermons! Being in a hurry isn't always a good thing. Doctors will tell you that eating too fast isn't healthy. Driving fast isn't safe. There are some things that take time.

Let's consider two of them:

First, from our passage, knowledge takes time. Any knowledge does that. Some learning doesn't come from books, but from living and that takes time. We call that experience. You apply for a job and the company wants someone with at least five years experience. You happen to be brand new out of school. There is no way to speed up the process and get five years of experience in two weeks. Knowledge takes time. So it is with the Bible. At first, we start with an academic approach to the Bible. Simply learning doctrines, histories, geographies, names and facts. We learn the books of

the Bible. We learn the names of the apostles. We learn where to find Jerusalem on a map. We learn the times and conditions in which Daniel was written. We learn dates, emperors, and dynasties. There is no hurry up here. It takes time. It takes reading, thinking and sitting in Bible classes, home studies, and listening to sermons. Learning and learning and grasping the big picture. Then our knowledge moves from an academic level to a deeper level, more of concepts, principles, trust and faith. The Bible often distinguishes these two levels as milk and meat. Meat is maturity. Meat is seeing the why's and how come's of a passage. Meat is dropping the net and really thinking about passages. Meat is able to understand what Paul meant when listing the works of the flesh, he said, "and things like these." What things? Paul didn't have to list them-folks will know, once they've spent some time learning and thinking.

Can there be any greater reason to attend Bible classes than this. We need to grow. We need to know. Some folks have been stuck in the third grade spiritually for decades. They know facts and can repeat them with a blink of an eye, but somehow they fail to get the concepts, the depth and the meat of God's will. They tend to be shallow-both in thought and faith. Death terrifies them, when it ought to be welcomed. Trials are not understood, when they ought to be viewed as an incredible learning experience. The purpose of worship is not grasped. They need depth. They need meat. They need knowledge. They need maturity. Don't hurry this up, but neither get stuck and stay where you are at. Movement and progress should always be taking place.

The second area that takes time are relationships. There aren't any short cuts here. It takes time to really get to know someone. That's one of the purposes of dating. It's easy to be attracted to the outside of someone, but what's on the inside? That takes time to know. The same goes with friendships...relationships with church members...and even our relationship with the Lord. It takes time. Those who don't have time, suffer. They miss out. They want to be close to others, but they don't want to make the time it takes to develop those relationships. In this hurry up world we live in, this reminds us that we need to slow down for important things, such as relationships.

Start first with your family. Can you name your kids favorite colors, songs, movies, desert? How about your mate's? Try this some time, go out to eat and you order your spouse's meal and she/he orders yours. Would that work or be a disaster? Do you know what the other likes? Often families will sit together on the couch, but the TV's on, everyone is texting or emailing and there's just not much bonding going on. Sound familiar? Connecting takes time.

Have a family from church over to your home. Get to know them. Become interested in their lives and their world. It will make worship more meaningful when you worship with people you know.

There was an old song by Paul Simon many years ago that started, "slow down, you move too fast..." That's true when it comes to knowledge and relationships.

Take your time with these things...it'll be worth it.

Roger Shouse

