

The Lakeview Lamp

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
-Psalm 119:105*

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Three Friends

Troy Nicholson

A certain man had three friends. One day he was summoned to court. He went to his three friends, begging them for their help. The first friend said, “All I am able to do is give you a new suit for your court appearance.” The second said, “I can go to the door of the courtroom with you, but no further.” “As for me,” said the third, “I will enter with you and speak on your behalf.”

Which of the three friends above should be considered the most important? Which should be considered the dearest friend? Would we not all agree on the third?

Our summons to court is our death. The first friend is our material goods, which we cannot take with us when we die. The second friend is our acquaintances, who can follow us to the cemetery but must leave us there. The third friend is Jesus Christ, who will speak of our life on the final day of judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 says, *“It is appointed for men to die once, but after*

this the judgment.” When we reach that point, how important will seeking the things of this world be to us? Will it matter if we accumulated a lot of things on earth? Like the rich man learned, we cannot take it with us (**Luke 16:19-26**). What a shame to in the end be among those who were in this life *“lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”* (**2 Tim 3:4**), for the pleasure will be short-lived (**Heb 11:25**).

And while it is good to have acquaintances upon this earth, they can only go so far with us. They cannot stand with us in the end before the Judge. *“The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself”* (**Ezek 18:20**). Each of us will be judged based on our own deeds (**2 Cor 5:10**), not those of any of our acquaintances.

Yet Christ can and will be there in the final judgment (**2 Cor 5:10**). In laying down His life for us on the cross (**John 15:13**), He has done for us what no other friend could do. Through His death we can be redeemed from our sin and go from death to life (**Rom 3:23-24; 6:23**). Through Him we can be ready for the summons of physical death and receive eternal spiritual life.

Christ is our most important friend. Only He will matter in the judgment. May we all have the resolve of Paul when he says, *“Therefore we make it our aim...to be well pleasing to Him”* (**2 Cor 5:9**). If we can only be pleasing to one friend, let’s make sure it is the One who will be with us all the way.

“Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.”—
Psalms 73:1

Know the Genuine Well

Troy Nicholson

Due to a large number of counterfeit bills being passed at their store, workers at a particular department store traveled to Washington for a two-week study on counterfeits. Upon their return, some friends asked them, “How much counterfeit did they show you?” They answered, “None. The entire course consisted of a detailed study of the real money. Our teachers worked on the principle that we could easily spot counterfeit if we knew the genuine well.”

The principle mentioned above also applies to the religious world. There are so many different religious groups today that are passing counterfeit doctrines for the true gospel. We should not be surprised by such, though, because the same took place in New Testament times (**Galatians 1:6-7**).

How can one know he or she has the truth in the midst of all the conflicting doctrines being taught today? How can we lead those who are surrounded by so many counterfeits to the truth? How can we be sure that we have the truth ourselves? The answer is to know the genuine well.

Before we can know the genuine well, we must have the desire to do so. Unfortunately, some are like those described in **Job 21:14** who say to God, “*We do not desire the knowledge of Your ways.*” David says the word of God is “*more to be desired than gold*” (**Psalm 19:10**). Can we describe our desire for God’s word in the same way?

It takes more than desire, though, to know the genuine well. It also takes diligence. Our desire must be strong enough to lead us to

action. In **Acts 17:11** we see that the Bereans had both the desire (“...*they received the word with all readiness...*”) and the diligence (“...*and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*”). We all need to heed Paul’s admonition to “*be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (**2 Timothy 2:15**).

Do you know the genuine well? If not, you are in danger of accepting a counterfeit. The effect of doing so with a dollar bill pales in comparison to doing so with the word of God. With the proper desire and diligence, we can all “*grow in the grace and knowledge*” of the genuine.

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"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).