

## ***Ten Major Causes of Failure – Part III – “A Lack of Knowledge”***

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July 5<sup>th</sup> 2009

One of the ten major reasons people fail today is because of a lack of knowledge.

### *Knowledge Would Be Increased in the Last Days*

The Bible says that in the last days knowledge would be increased. In Daniel 12:4 the command from Michael the archangel came to Daniel saying, “*But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*”

The archangel Michael was telling Daniel to shut and seal the words of the prophecy. The prophesy was to remain sealed until the end times. How were we to know when we would be in the end times?

During the end times there would be a time of astonishing mobility and a monumental increase of knowledge.

There is a lot of knowledge in our land.

Some of us may remember the time when we would have to stick a 5.25” floppy disk into our computer to save our data. The first 5.25” floppy disk was able to store 360k bytes of information. A byte is one character of space. For comparison, the Bible has 4,500,000 characters. It would take 12.5 of these floppy disks to store the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

Today, with a computer that has a hard drive capacity of 500G(igabytes), you can store over 112 thousand copies of the Bible and this can be done without compression (for you computer geeks).

I am told that there are actually 142 million books at the Library of Congress. This includes a copy every book printed in the United States. The point of the matter is that there is a lot of information out there; there is a lot of knowledge out there.

Increased is the way knowledge is transmitted and transferred from one person to the next. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century it took 9 weeks to get a letter from England to Virginia. Today it could take less than a second.

Over in the New Testament we also find commentary about the last days as it relates to the topic of “knowledge.”

*2 Tim 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:*

*2 Tim 3:7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Paul tells us that in the last days, men would be “always learning.” Daniel was told in the Old Testament days, almost 800 years earlier that there would be a monumental increase of knowledge and in 2 Timothy chapter three, Paul says that people would be “*always learning*” but then he goes on to say that these people would “*never be able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*”

In other words, there would be a whole lot of knowledge out there and when it came to the knowledge that was vital to being in right standing with God, there would be those who would have a hard time finding it. If they found it, some would not embrace it and the characteristics listed in verse 2-6.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/director/cod/christondiskstory.htm>

Jesus says it this way in Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Early in the Bible we find God delivering to His people a systematic process for this “training” or “indoctrination” into the knowledge of God.

### *Passing on a Spiritual Legacy—a Working Knowledge of the Word of God*

God calls out a people for Himself from among the nations of the world. They were to maintain a distinctiveness—a uniqueness from the other nations. They were to be different.

*Deu 6:1 "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess,*

God even gave them land—an area that was marked out by God for His people to settle and inhabit.

All this conflict we hereabout and see in the Middle East over the land and the pressuring of Israel to give some of her land to the Palestinians is the devil’s way of getting rid of God’s people. God gave the land to Israel!

As Israel possessed the land they were to observe the commandments of the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:2 tells us that they were not only to keep God’s Word themselves but were to pass the commandments, statutes and judgments of God down to their children and children’s children.<sup>2</sup>

The Bible tells us that as they kept the commandments of God, they would be blessed.

*Deu 6:2 "that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.*

*Deu 6:3 "Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you; 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'*

In verse four, we come to what is known as the Shema. This verse was and still is the very first verse that each Jewish boy and girl learns. This is the verse that every devout Jew recites each day. The God-fearing Jew utters the Shema when dying.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says, *Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad.* -- “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”

The literal word meanings are roughly as follows:

*Shema* — listen, or hear (according to the Targum, *accept*)

*Yisrael* — Israel, in the sense of the people or congregation of Israel

*Adonai* — often translated as "Lord", it is read in place of the Tetragrammaton (YHWH "Yahweh")

*Eloheinu* — our God, the word "E~~l~~" or "Eloh" signifying God (*see also*: Elohim), and the plural possessive determiner suffix "-nu" or "-enu" signifying "our"

*Echad* — the Hebrew word for the number “1”

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.chabad.org/kids/article\\_cdo/aid/323501/jewish/Shema-Yisroel.htm](http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/323501/jewish/Shema-Yisroel.htm)

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” The Shema was Israel’s distinguishing mark. It separated them from the surrounding nations that practiced polytheism, or the worship of many gods.

Remember, God had called them out from among the pagan nations. He called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees so that He might become the father of the Hebrew nation.

God gave them their own way to dress.

He gave them their own dietary law.

He gave them certain days of the months and of the years that would make them unique.

He gave them a special place to live.

He gave them a moral code—His law.

*Deu 6:5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

*Deu 6:6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.*

The verb “to love” אָהַב (’ahav) in this setting communicates not so much an emotional idea as one of covenant commitment and complete devotion. To love the Lord is to be absolutely loyal and obedient to him in every respect, a truth Jesus himself taught (cf. John 14:15).<sup>3</sup>

In OT physiology the *heart* (לֵב, לֵבָב; levav, lev) was considered the seat of the mind or intellect, so that one could think with one’s heart. One translation has verse five as saying, “*You shall love the LORD your God with your whole mind, you whole being, and with all your strength.*”

The Hebrew was to be totally committed, devoted and loyal to God in every respect. They were to embrace the commands of God with their whole mind.

It wasn’t to be a “Sabbath only” exercise.

It wasn’t to be something that they uttered when they wanted to sound “Jewish.”

The commandments, statutes and ordinances of God were to infiltrate every aspect of their lives and community. The knowledge of God was to permeate every fiber of their being.

When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment of all, he quoted this text (Matt 22:37-38).

And, in order to insure that this wasn’t just a one-generational occurrence, they were to pass down the knowledge of God to their children:

*Deu 6:7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

The word “teach” in verse 7 is the Hebrew word that literally means to, “point;” “prick.” It means to “engrave,” that is, “to teach incisively.” In other words, the parent was to “Drill the words of God into their children.”

Not only was the parent to teach the knowledge of God to their children; they were to talk or discuss the words of God—while they sat in their houses and when they traveled. In other words, whether home or abroad, they were to impart the words of God to their children.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://net.bible.org/passage.php?passage=deu%206:4-9%3B11:13-21>

Moses goes on to tell the people of God that when they lie down for bed, and when they got up in the morning, the words of God were to be on their lips.

In Deuteronomy 6:8-9 Moses says to God's people, "*You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*"

Jewish tradition teaches that followers literally tied little leather containers to the forearms and foreheads. These containers were called *tefillin* or *phylacteries*. They were to contain passages from the Torah such as, Exod 13:1-10, 11-16; Deut 6:5-9; 11:13-21.

The God-fearing Jew would also attach little boxes that contained passages of Scripture to their doorframes. Some would attach likenesses of the tablets of the Ten Commandments to their doorframes as well.

The purpose of wearing the phylactery or attaching the box to the doorframe was to communicate that they were in covenant relationship with God and in obedience to Him.

Deuteronomy 6:7 says, "*You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*"

God called the parents to impart the knowledge of God to their children—this was their primary responsibility.

Notice that this passage of Scriptures doesn't say it's the primary responsibility of the parent to put food in their child's stomach, clothes on their back and a roof over their head.

The reason why it doesn't say anything about this is because it presupposes that God will take care of those things. The fact of the matter is that God has already said that He would do it.

Here God is laying down the supreme responsibility of the parent to pass on the knowledge of God to the next generation.

In summary, God's desire was to set His people apart from the rest of the world:

- He gave them a dietary law that would set them apart from the other people groups of the world.
- He even gave them their own land that would physically set them apart from the rest of the world.
- He gave them strict codes of laws, ethics and morals.

In the New Testament God hasn't changed His ways with respect to His people. Hebrews 13:8 lets us know that "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*"

Just as God called Abraham out from among the heathen nations, so He has called the church out of the world. Turn in your Bible and read with me the words of Peter:

*(1 Pet 2:9 NKJV) But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

*(1 Pet 2:10 NKJV) who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

God gave the church a strict code of ethics—both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures.

Although God didn't give the church a dietary law and land like the Israelites, He gave us his Holy Spirit and commanded us to feast and to fellowship with one another around the Lord's table in remembrance of Him—this communion would set us apart from the world.

He also raises up men who would prophetically preach and teach the Word and be ready in season and out of season; convincing, rebuking, exhorting, with all longsuffering and teaching. (2 Tim 4:2)

God still gives to parents the supreme responsibility of passing on the knowledge of God to their children and grandchildren. We see an example of this in 2 Timothy chapter 1:

*2 Tim 1:5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.*

*2 Tim 1:6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

Timothy a church planter and pastor a mother and grandmother who passed the knowledge of God to him. There is no mention of his father—who was probably not a Christian, deadbeat or dead—whatever the case, he was out of Timothy's life.

If you are a single mom, God has laid on you the supreme responsibility of passing on the knowledge of God to your kids.

God has also called godly men to pass on the knowledge of God to other men:

*2 Tim 2:1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

*2 Tim 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

In Paul's letter to Titus, a pastor, he says the following:

*Titus 2:6 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded,*

The word "exhort" or "encourage" is *parakaleo*, and means to "come alongside and encourage"—younger men were to be encouraged to be sober-minded. The older men were to come alongside the younger men to help them to be *sober-minded*.

The word sober-minded comes from the Greek word, *sophroneo*, so-fron-eh'-o and means to be of sound mind, i.e. sane, or to be in right mind. It is used in Mark 5:15 and Luke 8:35 to describe the man who was found in his right mind only after Jesus had delivered him from demon possession.

In our text the older men were to come along side the younger men to help them to be "sane" or "in their right mind." The older men were to come alongside the younger men to impart the knowledge of God.

God has called godly women to pass on the knowledge of God to other women:

*Titus 2:3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;*

*Titus 2:4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,*

*Titus 2:5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

### ***Lack of Knowledge***

Embracing right and proper knowledge is important to God. In the Old Testament book of Hosea God says, “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*” (Hosea 4:6)

God had called Israel out from among the nations of the world to be His own people.

The world was to look at Israel and find out what God was like.

Israel was to reflect the love and character of God.

She was to declare the holiness of God.

Israel was to be God’s priest that would usher the inhabitants of the world into the presence of God.

God called Abram out from the pagan Chaldean people so that through His seed all the nations of the world would be blessed (Genesis 12). Israel was to be the vehicle through which God would bring forth His Son, the Messiah—the Savior of the World.

But Israel had drifted away from the call of God on them as a people. They drifted and were being destroyed. Carnality had set in. Idolatry was being practiced. The people of God had begun to sacrifice their own children to the pagan god Molech (Lev 20:2; Jer. 32:35).

They were being destroyed because of a lack of knowledge. What kind of knowledge? In Hosea 4:1, God tells them the kind of knowledge He was referring to.

*“Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land.”*

As we have already seen, there is a lot of knowledge that pervades our land. The problem today isn’t a lack of knowledge, it’s the wrong knowledge. What is missing today is the knowledge of God.

In the Bible we find that oftentimes the words wisdom and knowledge are used interchangeably. For example, in Proverbs 1:7 we find, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*”

With that in mind we turn to James chapter three to see a discourse on wisdom. Here James contrasts the wisdom of God from the wisdom of this world.

*James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

*James 3:14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.*

*James 3:15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.*

*James 3:16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

The wisdom and knowledge of this world is associated with sensuality, envy, self-seeking, confusion and every evil thing. It is associated with demons.

When people do evil against you this is the thinking that says, “I don’t get angry, I get even.”

Another piece of the wisdom of this world is found in the twisting of Scripture—some say, “*Do unto others before they do unto you.*”

- “You Only Live Once – Make The Most Of It”
- “What You Don’t Know Can’t Hurt You”
- “Sweet Revenge”
- “Do Whatever You Like But Don’t Get Caught”
- “You’ve Got To Try Before You Buy.”
- “Look Out For Number One”
- “If No-one Gets Hurt Its Not Really A Crime”
- “God Helps Those Who Help Themselves”
- “How one conducts himself in private life doesn’t matter just as long as it doesn’t impact his public performance.”

This is the wisdom of the world. This is what the knowledge of the world teaches.

James goes on to contrast the wisdom of the world with the wisdom that is from above:

*James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

In the first chapter of the book of Romans, Paul tells us that a lack of the knowledge of God has been a recurring problem:

*Rom 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

*Rom 1:21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

*Rom 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,*

*Rom 1:23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

*Rom 1:24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,*

*Rom 1:25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*Rom 1:26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.*

*Rom 1:27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

*Rom 1:28 **And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,** God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;*

*Rom 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,*

*Rom 1:30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

*Rom 1:31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;*

When you don’t retain God in your knowledge, your life begins to exhibit the characteristics of one who is without God.

How does one retain the knowledge of God?

You retain God in your knowledge when you acquaint yourself with Him through His Word.  
You retain God in your knowledge when you place yourself under the preaching of God's Word.  
You retain God in your knowledge when you place yourself under the teaching of God's Word.

Some of you like to "OD" on the preaching but are anemic because you haven't been getting fed the Word of God.

How do I know that? I know that because I've come across too many Christians who cannot contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints (Jude).

Acts chapter two tells us that the first century church met for the "apostle's doctrine." In other words, they were indoctrinated with the apostle's teaching. (Some in the church don't even know what an "apostle" is. Some church folk think that the epistles are the wives of the apostles.)

What is "the apostle's teaching?"

It is the body of truth they received from the Lord Jesus Christ.  
It is the truth concerning how we are saved.  
It is the teaching concerning how we ought to conduct ourselves in the house of God

This is why you have a pastor. This is why you have teachers in the church—to teach you the apostle's doctrine. This is what we find taught in Ephesians 4:

*Eph 4:11-13 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith **and of the knowledge of the Son of God**, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...*

We are living in a time when more church folk can name the 12 finalists of American Idol than can recite the Ten Commandments.

Our kids know the lyrics to the music of the top ten rappers but you can't get them to recite ten Bible verses.

Parents aren't doing any better. They know where to find their favorite show in the lineup but cannot find the book of Hezekiah in the Bible.

The average Christian adult spends more time watching TV or on the Internet than in prayer and Bible reading. The entertainment industry exercises a powerful influence over the way Christians think and feel about the world.

The average Christian watches 26 hours of movies and/or television per week—about fifty times the amount we spend listening to sermons. It is also true that the average Christian spends more money on entertainment than on all forms of Christian offerings combined.

Ephesians 4:14 describes what happens when there is a lack of the knowledge of God in the church.

*Eph 4:14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,*

You keep this from happening by doing what Paul says in verse 15:

*Eph 4:15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ;*

People are learning all kinds of crazy doctrines in the church today. The sad thing is that when they sit under these kinds of people they don't have sense enough to go home and search the Scriptures to see if what they are hearing is the truth (Acts 17:11).

This past week at LIFE Group I shared with our gathering what Scripture teaches on the reason why it was given to us.

*(2 Tim 3:16 NKJV) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,  
(2 Tim 3:17 NKJV) that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The Christian life is like a road.

*Doctrine* - What the road is (What God expects; what we should be doing; how we should be living; how we should be thinking, processing ideas, interacting with people; Who Christ is—Christology; Who God is—what is He like (theology); missiology<sup>4</sup>; soteriology - the doctrine of salvation<sup>5</sup>)

*Reproof* - When you get off the road (When we are not meeting God's expectation; when we are sinning—transgressing God's laws. When we are not being "Christ-like.")

*Correction* - How to get back on the road (How to repent; How to turn back to the Lord and His Word)

*Instruction in righteousness* - How to stay on the road (Habits we must develop and practice; things we need to do like prayer, memorizing Scripture—hiding it in our hearts; putting on the whole armor of God; resisting the devil; casting down imaginations and anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God)

Many people have great difficulty in life because they have not retained God in their knowledge— This is sad because having the knowledge of God is one of the things that Jesus, in his high-priestly prayer, prayed we would have.

*John 17:3 – “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

Eternal life consists in the continual, progressive, and experiential knowledge of God grounded in His Holy Word, the Bible. It culminates in Christ and His mission.

In other words, one of the evidences that you are a Christian is a desire for the Word—a desire to know God the Father—a desire to know Jesus Christ who He sent.

This was the desire of the Apostle Paul—he wanted to know Christ. Listen to what he writes in Philippians chapter three:

*Phil 3:7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.*

<sup>4</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missiology>

<sup>5</sup> <http://bible.org/article/soteriology-doctrine-salvation>

*Phil 3:8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ Phil 3:9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; Phil 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,*

I believe it was the knowledge of God that encouraged Paul when he was suffering for the Gospel. It was the knowledge of God that sustained Paul when he was in chains for preaching the Gospel.

Throughout the Scripture you can find how the knowledge of God supported God's servants when they were in the deepest, darkest periods of their lives.

Proverbs 2:10 speaks of the pleasantness of knowledge to your soul.

Prov 9:10 *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

Prov 22:12 *The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge,*

Hosea 6:3 *Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.*

One can be encouraged as he or she meditates on and is secure in the knowledge of God concerning His attributes—omnipotence (His power to protect me), omniscience (He is aware of what is going on in my life), His love, His grace, His mercy, etc.

In Psalm 139, David muses over the God who is omnipresent. He writes, *"You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it."*

In Hosea chapter 4, God says, *"My people are destroyed because of a lack of knowledge."* Not only did they have a lack of knowledge, they had rejected His knowledge. If you were living during this time, would this indictment have included you?

### **How to Retain the Knowledge of God**

1. Get a copy of the Bible, God's Word
2. Read your copy of God's Word
3. Place yourself under the teaching of the Word of God by a qualified teacher
  - Bring your Bible to church
  - Be attentive when the Word of God is taught
  - Place yourself under the teaching of the Word of God by a qualified teacher
  - Attend LIFE Group
4. Place yourself under the teaching of the Word of God by a qualified teacher
5. Did I say "Read God's Word?"
6. Meditate (chew on) God's Word
7. Memorize God's Word
8. Pray God's Word
9. Obey God's Word
10. Share God's Word

Lastly, Christians are not only entrusted with the responsibility retain the knowledge of God; we are called to proclaim the knowledge of God so that God might mercifully save someone. We are not only called to know Christ, we are called to make Christ known.

*1 Tim 2:3-6 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to **come to the knowledge of the truth**. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,*

*2 Cor 2:14-15- Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, **and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place**. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*

*2 Cor 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts **to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**.*