

# The Old Paths

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“86,400”

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## Needed: Christians Who Know The Bible

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**86,400** is quite a large number, isn't it? Imagine someone giving you \$86,400 today. What might you do with it? Might you pay off your bills, your mortgage, and other similar things with that kind of money? What if someone gave you 86,400 gold bars? How rich might someone be who could own 86,400 houses? Certainly one would be quite blessed could he be able to number 86,400 close friends.

Yet, we are not speaking of those things when we refer to the number 86,400. What is it that equals 86,400? It is not the number of bones in one's body. It is not the number of days in a year. What is it, then? 86,400 equals the number of **seconds in a day!!!**

Yes, each day affords us 86,400 seconds of time in which to live, to work, and to serve God. How are we using this time? Someone once made the observation of how hard it would be for someone to spend \$86,400 each day with the stipulation that he could not save it, nor “invest” it, etc., because at the end of the day, he would lose any money he had not spent. This is similar to our gift of 86,400 seconds. The seconds we have this day will be used up in this day, and at the end of the day, they are gone forever!

Friends, how are we using our time? For some time, it has bothered me to hear someone use the expression, “kill time.” Please understand, I don't think that phrase is sinful, but it bothers me because

it expresses an attitude that perhaps we do not appreciate this gift of time like we should. Time should not be “killed,” wasted, etc., but savored and used wisely. This is stated again and again in the Bible. David asked God to, “*teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*” (Ps. 90:12). Man's life has been compared in Scripture to a vapor (Jas. 4:14). It has also been compared to grass or a flower, which “withers” and “falls away” in time (I Pet. 1:23). Job said “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*” (Job 14:1). He also said, “*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope*” (Job 7:6). Paul recognized the brevity of life when he stressed the importance of obeying God “now” (II Cor. 6:2). It is written, “*To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*” (Heb. 3:7-8).

There is continued emphasis in Scripture on one doing what is right “now” and “today”! Why? Because we do not know what will happen in a day (Prov. 27:1).

Brethren and friends, 86,400 seconds is all we have been given for this day. HOW will we use this precious time? Will it be used in selfish pursuits, or in godly efforts? If the Lord wills, and we wake up to a new day tomorrow, HOW will we use the 86,400 seconds given to us on that day? The world has given us far too many “distractions” wherein we are encouraged to waste our time. (I say this as one who is guilty of wasting time, too!) Yet, let us resolve today to stop wasting time and “redeem the time” we have (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5)!

In the early 1900's, members of the church of Christ in this country had a reputation for being “walking Bibles.” In fact, it was sometimes (half seriously) suggested that if no Bible was available in the courtroom for a witness to put his hand on while being “sworn in,” he could simply place his hand on the head of a member of the church of Christ — that would be as good as having a Bible! The point is: members of the Lord's church used to be well known for their Bible knowledge. Few people in denominational churches wanted to “tangle” with any member of the church of Christ in a Bible discussion, because members of the Lord's church simply knew their Bibles too well to be “tangled” with.

To our shame and embarrassment, the average member of the church of Christ today cannot live up to that old positive reputation. Our world has created so many distractions for us that the average member no longer devotes much time at all to a study of the Bible. For too many in the church, the only Bible study that gets done takes place during church services! Beyond that, a lot of us just don't study! And because our knowledge of Scripture has fallen way off, we are no longer able to defend the truth against error — like those in earlier generations could. The fact is that many of us in the church of Christ today would be hard pressed to give “book, chapter, and verse” in answer to even a simple question like, “What must I do to be saved?” Could you ... really?

But it's not just our inability to defend truth against error that concerns me. Our lack of Bible knowledge is producing serious spiritual problems among us. We make bad spiritual choices in our daily lives, because we do not know enough about God's

word to help us choose wisely and rightly. And it's not uncommon to hear Christians trying to defend sinful (or at least dangerous) practices by saying, "I don't see what is wrong with it!" Maybe the reason you "don't see anything wrong with it" is because you are deficient in "real knowledge" and don't have your spiritual "*senses trained to discern good and evil*" (Phil. 1:9-11; Heb. 5:11-14). Whether or not we "see anything wrong with it" is irrelevant! What matters is what God says about it — and you won't know what that is without a careful study of His word.

If our future (as individual Christians or as the church) is going to bring glory to God, then we need desperately to start learning *now* how to be good Bible students. Knowing God's word is critical to any real progress for the future. Any "workman" who wants to be approved of God must know how to handle "*accurately the word of truth*" (II Tim. 2:15). We cannot know God, either now or in the future, if we do not know His word.

Lamenting over Old Testament Israel, God once said: "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6). Is that God's opinion of us today? Will our lack of knowledge ultimately lead to our own destruction? It will, if we don't do something about it! We cannot afford to wait another minute; we need to start studying the Bible *today*.

I know of an old preacher who was once told by a young admirer: "Sir, I'd give half my life to know the Bible like you do!" To this, the old preacher replied: "Well, son, that's about what it's taken — about half my life."

Knowing the Bible well requires a lifetime of study ... beginning right now! If you care about the future of the Lord's church — if you have a vision for the future — start studying your Bible today!

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**T**he Bible is not a dead letter as some would like for us to believe. Please note the following with care, and with all due consideration.

The word of God quickens — Psalm 119:25

It is a living word --- Hebrews 4:12

It gives life --- John 6:63

Man is to live by it — Matthew 4:4

It makes us free --- John 8:32

It sanctifies us — John 17:17

We are begotten by it --- James 1:16

Christians grow by it — 1 Peter 2:2

It purifies the soul — 1 Peter 1:22

It saves the soul — James 1:21

It builds us up — Acts 20:32

It converts the soul — Psalm 19:7

Gives us all things pertaining to life and godliness — 2 Peter 1:3

Makes one wise unto salvation — 2 Timothy 3:15

It is powerful — Hebrews 4:12

Furnishes to all good work — 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Gives light — Proverbs 6:23

Gives understanding — Ephesians 3:4

It will go with us through death — Psalm 23rd chapter.

It will judge us at the last day — Revelation 20:12

The Bible pleads with you to come to Christ — Matthew 11:28

The Bible pleads with you to believe on Christ — Mark 16:15-16

The Bible pleads with you to come to repentance — 2 Peter 3:9

The Bible pleads with you to confess the name of Christ — Philippians 2:10-11

The Bible pleads with you to be buried with Christ in baptism — Romans 6:1-6

The Bible pleads with you to follow Christ — Matthew 16:24

The Bible pleads with you to be prepared to meet Christ — Matthew 25:31

We are commanded to keep His teaching pure -- Titus 2:7. To obey it — Romans 6:17-18. Abide in it — 2 John 9. Defend it — Jude 3. And to preach it — 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

--- J.C. Roady

Read Your Bible  
(A tract circa 1965)

**Editor's Note:**

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**Wednesday Evening Bible Study** \_\_\_\_\_ **7:00 pm**

Don't forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-9246 (WBIO)** with your Bible question.

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