

The Doctrine of Interaction

Lesson 6

The Issue: One must make a determination about the source of knowledge. The question is, how do we know what we know? Without a source of knowledge that is beyond human experience, then the writer of Psalm 25 has a problem. But David is committed to a knowledge base that is revealed and therefore not subject to the vagaries of human intelligence nor personal circumstance.

Underlying Assumptions as Expressed in Everyday Terms:

- 1) Believers would agree that the ultimate source of knowledge is God-- but wouldn't we also have to insist that one take into consideration the place of humanly derived knowing? We are definitely supposed to interact with God based on the Bible; and, equally, are we not to interact with the material world on the basis of our comprehension of that material world?
- 2) One of the greatest gifts that God has given us is the ability to find better and more effective experiential techniques that we can use to live life to a higher degree.
- 3) The very ability to think and analyze shows that God approves of the use of this ability to gather information, process it, and make decisions.
- 4) I know good Christians who greatly respect the Bible and believe it is essential for church organization, ethics, and information about how to be saved. Isn't that enough?

The Generalization: True people of faith interact with the world of matter and energy based on a REVEALED EPISTEMOLOGY. An epistemology is a way of knowing what we know.

The Scripture Passage: Psalm 25:4-5.

The Lesson:

- 1) We are all faced with two basic questions: a) what do we call knowledge? And b) how do we get knowledge?
- 2) How do we judge its importance, validity and place in human life? David has learned much from his personal experience, his family, and whatever form of education that he had (formal and or informal). In the face of all that David has

learned from and knows from these channels, he tells us that they are not enough!

3) David in these verses expresses that he wants to remove “the middle man.” He would remove what serves in an intermediate role: what we call “knowing” and/or “knowledge.” This refers to what we call worldly knowledge or worldly wisdom.

4) For many people, worldly knowledge and wisdom serve as intermediates between us, our situations and the word of God. In other words, worldly knowledge intermediates between our minds and the revealed message of truth: the Word of God, the Scriptures.

5) We note in these verses that David does not put “hope” in the wrong thing. In verse 5 he writes, “my hope is in you all day long.” He puts hope in the wisdom of God; and therefore he withdraws hope from direct experience of the world that he lives in. That is, he does not place his hope in the world of matter and energy.

6) David wants instead to have direct relation to God, and he wants the epistemology (way of knowing) that accompanies that relation.

7) In verse 4, he asks the Lord:
Lord, you show me your ways
Lord, you teach me your paths
Lord, you guide me in your truth
and Lord, you teach me.

And what is David’s reason for doing things this way? He states also in verse 4 that he does these things “for you are God my savior.” David is looking to God as the ultimate source of knowledge, and not the material world!

8) So, what does this mean? It means precisely that we do not interact with matter and energy on our terms! Rather, we do so on the basis of what the Lord thinks and on what He has to say!

9) The only knowledge that David seeks as intercessory is REVEALED knowledge. We should be clear about this: He is not looking to “religion,” “religious thought,” “theology,” “history,” nor anything of the like. David is looking to revealed wisdom.

10) This is most remarkable. Here is a mind that is, or has been, REFORMULATED by the access granted to it, access to the mind of God! In other words, the mind’s knowledge base has been changed. David is in real trouble and in that situation he is not looking for experiential “technique” as his way of getting out. That is not how this man chooses to interact with the world of matter and energy. David is changing his knowledge base (epistemology) from experience to revelation. DAVID WANTS WHAT THE REST OF THE

WORLD DISCOUNTS!

11) David's confidence in the wisdom of God is high. He has lost confidence in the power of human wisdom. The psalmist sees two planes: a) the plane of the wisdom of God and b) the plane of the wisdom of men. He recognizes a differentiation. He believes, he has faith in the idea, that what God shows, teaches, guides is superior. That is to say, it is categorically different, better, superior to anything human.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What evidence do we see in Psalm 25 that David's epistemology was not from personal experience, cultural wisdom, nor human logic? Does this mean that personal experience, cultural wisdom, human logic and other such elements were completely absent from his life? If they were absent, explain and defend your answer from this psalm and elsewhere in the life of David. If they were present in his life, give evidence from this psalm and elsewhere in the life of David of how he dealt with these elements.
- 2) Given what you've studied from Psalm 25, how would David answer a critic who might say that his dependence on God was not practical? Not logical? Was reckless?
- 3) How could it be said that worldly knowledge intermediates between God and our own personal situations of trouble? How could it be said that knowledge from God is more direct?
- 4) How does access to the mind of God reformulate one's mind? Do you know any other scripture passages that deal with this? How does such access to the mind of God alter the "knowledge base" or epistemology of a believer?
- 5) What situation or situations are you currently facing that would be easier to bear if you had the kind of direct access we've been discussing? What would you have to do in order to assign proper "weight" to revealed knowledge about your situation? To other epistemologies?
- 6) In such a situation, what today prevents you from acting on the knowledge that God's wisdom is superior to any other source of wisdom in handling your situation?