



CEO Devotional – September 3, 2013
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You Don't Know What You Don't Know

Mark Twain has been attributed with telling the story of a 14 year old who was disappointed with how little his father knew but, when he reached the age of 25, was amazed at what his father had subsequently learned. The story resonates with me and perhaps with you as we remember how much we thought we knew when we were younger only to look back and wish that we knew then what we know now. We didn't know what we didn't know.

Our heavenly Father alludes to this in Isaiah 55:8-9 when he tells us that His ways are not our ways and that His thoughts are not our thoughts – fundamentally different, above us, and always part of His bigger story. I am learning that the gap is bigger than I thought.

Growing up in a Christian home one learns a lot of information about Christianity. It is easy to appear knowledgeable and even mature compared with others. It is still a good thing but it can be just information, with no real understanding of the gap of His ways and thoughts.

I applied myself to my studies and career, both secular and sacred, in the belief that the better prepared I was, the better I could do what God wanted me to do. At times, I was incredibly disciplined to read my Bible each day and through my college years particularly, made daily reading of 5 Psalms and a Proverb a ritual such that I read them 12 times a year.

But what I knew was packaged by me – my life experiences and how I interpreted this information. The Pharisees in Jesus' time had the same problem. They had knowledge but they walked around as with a veil over their faces, unwilling to consider that God's ways and thoughts were not what they understood from their learning.

God had a different interpretation and saw the same things differently. For example, my image of my heavenly Father was naturally skewed by my experience with my earthly father. God had another picture of Himself that I didn't know about which I am still unwrapping. If I had known of, and tapped into, the *reality* of that image and not just the information, my walk with Him and my family would have been very different. It wasn't enough to study them, I lacked revelation of them.

Behaviors, habits and responses all start with a set of beliefs and our understanding of something. Telling myself to change is just more information. God has a picture of me that only He can communicate to me but I am learning that it is one that actually fits the way I am made and isn't done by force. He is changing me by being with me in a way that I never could have achieved by knowledge and self-discipline, but rather by leading me into experiencing His new ways and thoughts.

What about work life? I like to think things through ahead of time to minimize surprises and ensure the best responses and courses of action. I got pretty good at starting the day with a long shower evaluating all the possibilities and then developing plans. As an added bonus it made me look quick on my feet. I am finding that God already has a plan for my day and I am learning to spend that thinking time finding out what it is. There are things I don't even know are coming that He already has plans for underway. My early morning planning can even put me on the wrong track.

My time with Him has gone from a discipline, for all the reasons I have learned and been told over the years, to a growing hunger to find out what is His plan – His ways and thoughts for me; as I learn to fully abide in Him. I am not there yet! I still know a lot of stuff and have healthy vestiges of that "supreme confidence of youth and self-sufficiency."

Even as it is my prayer for me, I also pray that each one reading this today will take time and ask: "Whose knowledge and whose plans am I working from today?" I pray that we will know Him, His wonderful thoughts, and His ways.