



Dear Friends,

This week, I was preparing the sermon from 1 Timothy 2. In Ch.2:4, Paul describes getting saved by Jesus as “to come to a knowledge of the truth.” Truth is a big deal in this letter. Paul instructs Timothy to “command certain people not to teach false doctrines” (1:3).

Knowing the truth of God and the way of salvation is a matter of life and death. That is why Paul is so adamant that Timothy must counter false teaching with gospel truth. It also explains why Paul emphasises that to be saved is “to come to a knowledge of the truth.” The truth that God is Saviour. That there is one God. That there is “one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.” (2:5-6)

Paul’s focus on the truth of the gospel reminded me of a couple of articles I read recently.

In his article, David Brooks (NYT 3/7/25) refers to a recent study in which participants were asked to compose essays. One group used A.I.. Another used search engines (like Google). The third group used their brains. The study found that those who only used their brains learnt more and identified more with what they wrote than the other two groups.

The more concerning finding was that those who just used their grey matter showed higher connectivity across a bunch of brain regions. Those who used search engines experienced less brain connectivity and A.I. users least of all. The researchers concluded:

“Collectively, these findings support the view that external support tools restructure not only task performance but also the underlying cognitive architecture.”

I get it! It’s like driving in Sydney. Where I once relied on a map and my memory to drive to places, I am now almost completely dependent on Google Maps. It’s a case of use it or lose it!

In her article, Mary Harrington (NYT 28/7/25) refers to studies which show that child and adult literacy is diminishing. This decrease in reading can be attributed to increased smartphone and associated social media usage. Harrington concludes:

“Making healthy cognitive choices is hard. In a culture saturated with more accessible and engrossing forms of entertainment, long-form literacy may soon become the domain of elite subcultures.”

The reason these articles came to mind is that we, as Christians, are to be people of the book. To be a Christian is to know Christ. You might counter, “But isn’t being a Christian not just a case of knowing, but of trusting and loving Jesus?” Absolutely, yes! You also need to know a person if you are to love and trust them. Truth matters, absolutely, to trusting and loving Jesus.

John Knox, the Scottish founder of Presbyterianism, had a vision for all Scottish children, rich, poor and in-between, to be educated. Knox wrote:

For the preservation of religion it is most expedient that schools be universally erected in all cities and chief towns, the oversight whereof to be committed to the magistrates and godly learned men of the said cities and towns.

Knox’s goal was that every Scot be able to read and learn, the Bible especially, to know Christ and to live a godly life.

So, next time you’re tempted to sit down with your smartphone, read a book instead. Best of all, read the Bible. Read a Christian book. Read the classics: Augustine, Calvin, Bonhoeffer, CS Lewis, Keller and Stott. And read history, novels and biographies. Know the truth!

God Bless,
Mark Adams