

Know Yourself
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

“An unexamined life is not worth living.” Socrates

Who said it first- Plato, Paul? Do you know yourself? Biologist Edmund Signott writes, “Until a man comes to know himself, all other knowledge he gains is incomplete.” Self-knowledge is uncommon because it is uncomfortable. We can go through life knowing more about the universe than we know about ourselves. Yes, self-knowledge is the most difficult to obtain.

Psychiatrist Scott Peck observed that the central defect of humanity lies *not* in the fact that people sin, but in the fact that *they refuse to acknowledge their sin*, thus becoming “people of the lie.” It is much easier to live with an illusion and pretend that we are someone we are not.

Is it not true that many of us, myself included, are sometimes good at keeping double accounts? We regularly spot the faults and failures of others, but we tend to overlook our own. While we think other people may be ‘stingy and selfish,’ we label ourselves as ‘thrifty.’ We hate arrogance when we see it in other people, but we hardly ever imagine that we may be guilty of pride ourselves. As Henry Ward Beecher phrased it, “Our churches are filled with bald-headed sinners whose hair has been worn off by the constant friction of countless sermons that have bounced off and hit the person seated in the seat behind.”

Someday, down the road ahead, you’re going to meet an older person; some 20, 40 50 years from now. He or she will be waiting there for you. And the kind of person you will meet depends entirely on yourself. Because that older person will be YOU! You will be the sum total of everything you think, say and do today. It’s up to you! Every day you are becoming more and more like yourself.

Remember, these results are not usually seen immediately, but they are adding up inside. So, examine your desires, habits, beliefs. Better take personal inventory and seek to make changes while you are still pliable before the hardness takes place. You’ll be much more likely to meet a splendid older person at the proper time.

All of us long for a secure place, where we can be known as we truly are and at the same time accepted. Yes, it takes courage to face both our vices and our virtues. But this is the first step toward becoming all God designed us to be. While we cannot eliminate the vices without outside help, yet a new self is possible by the grace of God. We won’t need to hide any longer. We can become the persons we were meant to be, forgiven children of our Creator with a solid sense of personal worth. Choose to know God through a personal relationship with Christ and you will begin to truly know yourself.

“Don’t cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, try to have a saying estimate of your capabilities by the light of faith that God has given”
(Romans 12:3 J.B. Phillips).