

# Four Things of Great Importance

## “The Inward and Outward Working”

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What makes something “important”? On what basis do we accept whether something is, or is not, important?

Clearly as Berean-believers we would want to see how Scripture treats such a question; and we find a very good overview of what the Father regards as “important” in the following verse.

**“That you should walk worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit and increasing in the full knowledge of God.”** (Col. 1:10)

In this text there are FOUR things that are deemed as “important” and not surprisingly they are all connected to the Lord.

The four things of great importance to Him are -

- ♦ **Walk worthy of the Lord**
- ♦ **Be pleasing to Him**
- ♦ **Bear fruit (for Him)**
- ♦ **Increase in the knowledge of God**

Let's now look at these four things. The first thing we notice is that two of them are OUTWARD works, and two are INWARD works.

- ♦ **Our walk is obviously on public show and is therefore an OUTWARD work.**
- ♦ **So too is the fruit we are to bear – another OUTWARD work.**
- ♦ **Then we have our pleasing God, an INWARD work.**
- ♦ **Also increasing in knowledge of Him is an INWARD work.**

Now note how these four are grouped: One OUTWARD work, followed by an INWARD work, followed by another OUTWARD work, and followed by yet another INWARD work.

There is a wonderful balance here of Outward / Inward / Outward / Inward. These are progressive – from the Outer Man to the Inner Man, and form a spiritual principle.

There is so much to do in Scripture that is balanced. For example, the Book of Genesis is balanced by the Book of Revelation. The 3,000 who died in Exodus 32:28 are balanced by the 3,000 who find life in Acts 2:41. Even in the structures of the various books of the Bible there are set out balanced harmonies (see The Companion Bible and its appendixes by E.W. Bullinger).

So it is we see that there is an OUTER work to be done (our walk), which corresponds to an INNER work of pleasing God, which manifests itself in fruitfulness (another OUTER work), culminating in our coming to a (lit.) full knowledge of God (a final INNER work).

Note that it starts with an outward walk and finishes with inward knowledge. The point being, that a true and full knowledge of God's will is inseparable from walking in conformity to it. In fact we only ever come to a full and mature knowledge of God's ways by His grace, which is granted by the revelation in the first place. We cannot make revelation come to us, it's a gift granted from heaven. Treat it so!

We will only get such wonderful knowledge if we're willing to walk in it. In today's age there is a great demand for more and more knowledge – or should we say “information”. However in the spiritual realm of things knowledge is dependent upon our willingness to use it wisely.

Wisdom is applied spiritual knowledge. This is what biblical wisdom is, applied spiritual knowledge. So if you want wisdom you're going to have to be willing to use it, applying it first to your own life before you inflict others with your “wisdom”.

There is a saying – **“the purpose of all knowledge is right conduct.”**

This is the first manifestation of their “walking worthy of the Lord.” The second is, “increasing (growing) in the knowledge of God (or as the oldest manuscripts read, ‘growing BY the full knowledge of God’)”

It is by endeavouring to become better acquainted with his true character. God is pleased with those who desire to understand what he is; what he does; what he purposes; what he commands

1. To walk - to be active in their Christian calling.
2. To walk worthily - suitably to the dignity of that calling, and to the purity of that God who had called them into this state of salvation.
3. To do everything unto all pleasing; that God might be pleased with the manner, the time, the motive, disposition, design, and object of every act.
4. That they should be fruitful; mere harmlessness would not be sufficient; as God had sown good seed, he expected good fruit.
5. That every work should be good; they must not be fruitful in some works and fruitless in others.
6. That they should increase in religious knowledge as time rolled on, knowing, by genuine Christian experience, more of God, of his love, and of his peace, day by day.

**"The full knowledge of God is the real instrument of enlargement in soul and life of the believer"** [Alford]. Another manifestation of their walk is (Col 1:11), “Being strengthened with all might,” etc. And yet another is (Col 1:12), “Giving thanks unto the Father,” etc.

**“The end of all knowledge is conduct”** (Lightfoot).