

Knowing Jesus: Everything Cannot be Your “One Thing”

By Bob Young

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“One thing.” Perhaps you think of Paul, “this one thing I do...” Perhaps you think of Curly’s Law from the movie, *City Slickers*. Curly tells Mitch that the secret of life is finding your “one thing.”

I know from experience that finding that “one thing” is challenging. I spent over forty years preparing a sermon (or two) every week—about a third of those years I also worked in Christian higher education. Life is easily overwhelmed by busyness. The tasks are endless. The “one thing” challenge is especially acute for preachers. The preacher is called to know a little bit about everything. The number of Bible topics is overwhelming. Multi-volume dictionaries and encyclopedias demonstrate the breadth of knowledge available. Commentaries are numberless.

As a preacher and professor, I lived the challenge daily. Early on, I decided that knowing a little about everything might be better than knowing a lot about a limited number of subjects. When one is called to teach and preach, one must develop a working knowledge of many topics. Then I learned that it is not enough to know a little. One is expected to know a lot!

A little over half a century later, here is what I know. **Everything cannot be my “one thing.”** I cannot be an expert in everything. It is okay to admit that I do not know something.

The challenge seems more acute than ever! Social media is not helping. Preachers feel compelled to post online and to post about many subjects. Reading and analyzing these online teachings, it is soon apparent that many know relatively little, that what they know is quite shallow, and that their understanding is often incomplete. Many are regurgitating what they have picked up somewhere else. A favorite college professor, Raymond Kelcy, more than once said that a sign of mastering a topic is the ability to explain something difficult in a way that anyone can understand, to make complex subjects and ideas easily understood.

Eventually I learned. I had to choose my “one thing.” For over two decades, I have tried to focus, to make my “one thing” knowing Jesus, the “one thing” of surpassing value, of supreme importance. I want to know him. I want to understand his words. I want to understand the Bible. I read fewer books than I used to. I prefer reading the Bible to reading books about the Bible. Knowing Jesus is more important than knowing about Jesus. Preaching Jesus is more important than preaching about Jesus.

Choose well and wisely your “one thing.” My suggestion? Make your one thing Jesus Christ, to know Him and proclaim Him!