There is a kind of knowledge which makes life abundant, & builds up the soul, as it is joined w/ love for God.

It is the knowledge of which Jesus spoke in Jn 17:3, when He prayed=> “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

The very essence of eternal life is knowledge—knowing God—knowledge that is attained thru a loving personal relationship w/ Jesus X.

God is the Source of all life & all truth, so when a person comes to know God thru faith in Christ, his soul makes a vital connection w/ life/truth itself.

But bare knowledge, on the other hand—apart from life/truth/love in X—can be nothing more than empowered human sinfulness.

Adam/Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good/evil, & gained some knowledge against God’s will, but that knowledge has brought the evil into this world that we still see today.

The knowledge of computer technology has empowered man in his depravity w/o improving his soul. The result has been identity theft, on-line predators, and a proliferation of pornography.
But when learning knowledge is linked w/ a commitment to loving God & doing His will, it becomes a blessing to man’s soul, & it brings glory to God.

**The Bible teaches man how to combine the learning of knowledge, w/ love of God, for an abundance of life.**

It’s being taught a godly lifestyle from God Himself.

It’s not simply memorizing facts or conceptualizing information (the world’s view of learning knowledge).

Socrates/Plato/Seneca were all adept at that sort of thing.

But they were all godless men of vile affections—which meant that spiritually, they were ignorant.

Jesus transcended their worldly notions of teaching/learning when He described the biblical idea of teaching/learning, in Luke 6=> “Everyone, after he has been fully trained [taught], will be like his teacher” (Lk 6:40).

This is more than learning a set of facts, an academic discipline, or even a philosophy of life.

It is learning a way of life, based on identifying w/ a teacher and emulating him/his-life as one’s role model.

W/i the context of Jesus’ statement, it also involves adopting the teacher’s belief system, his core-values, & his moral code.

So true learning, is truly life-changing.
A student’s choice of teachers is the key to it all, because that teacher represents what he will become when he’s fully trained.

So he must be able to form a close/trusting relationship w/ the teacher, knowing he will be called upon to yield his own will, to the teacher’s will.

Better yet, the student will come to love his teacher.

In today’s text X will relate this principle to being taught by God.

* 1\(^{st}\), He will apply it to Himself, saying=> “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me” (emulating a role model).

* 2\(^{nd}\), He will apply the same principle to anyone=>

“\textit{If anyone is willing to do His [God’s] will, he will know of the teaching}” (starting w/ an attitude of willingness/openness).

A person who is not willing to trust/obey God, can never learn the eternal truth God has, to teach him.

Learning from the Lord must include a willingness to do as He commands, & to do it out of trust/love-for-Him.

I.e., we must start w/ a right attitude.

Then the accumulation of biblical knowledge will be truly profitable to our souls which are already rich w/ love for the Lord.

In X’s prayer (Jn 17) He makes a statement about His Apostles that seems to reverse this process, beginning w/ knowledge, which leads to love=>
“I have made Your [God’s] name known to them [the Apostles], and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (17:26).

But this is not really knowledge coming before trust/love. The Apostles’ hearts had already been opened up to Jesus’ teaching about the Father, by their love for X Himself. They started out w/ a willing attitude because they already trusted/loved Jesus, creating a willing readiness in their hearts to believe anything He taught them about God the Father.

Jesus’ point in today’s text is that, in order to believe that Jesus’ words represent God’s own words, a person must start w/ a previous willingness to accept God’s words & to do God’s will.

If he’s already sincerely seeking God’s will, X’s words will ring true to him, so he will believe/embrace them. This includes the primitive person living on an isolated island.

On the other hand, if his own will is set in opposition to God’s will, his kneejerk reaction to Jesus’ words will always be to reject them—a/w/a X Himself.
Today’s text explains how we are taught by God, & it does so through a question asked about X, His own answer to the question, then the evidence that proves His answer is true.

* The Jews’ Question (about Jesus)

[John 7:14-15]=> “But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. / The Jews then were astonished, saying, ‘How has this man become learned, having never been educated?’”

That’s the question.

The fact that Jesus went to Jerusalem in the midst of the Feast of Booths is significant, in light of the events just before this in John 7.

As we have seen, this was a weeklong feast (the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles).

Jesus’ natural brothers had asked Him to go to the feast earlier w/ them, but He had declined for 2 reasons=>

1st, He wanted nothing to do w/ their ambitions for Him—becoming the kind of political/pragmatic messiah they (a/w/a many other Jews) were wanting.

2nd, the Heavenly Father had stopped Jesus from going to the feast in a caravan from Galilee because the religious leaders were waiting there for X—plotting to kill Him.

That would have made it easy for them to arrest Him & do so.
Having slipped into Jerusalem quietly, Jesus suddenly
appeared in the Temple, in the middle of the week.
Because He had become famous, a crowd quickly began to gather
around Him, as He started to teach.
This wasn’t unusual—prominent rabbis often taught groups
of people in the huge Court of the Gentiles during
national religious feasts such as this.
Jesus’ unexpected appearance in the temple caught the Jewish
authorities off guard, and blocked their plan to arrest Him.
They would make a feeble attempt to do so later in the
chapter, but the people gathered around Him would
split into pro-Jesus/anti-Jesus factions, and rather
than risk a riot, the leaders backed off.
Then they’d send in a police squad called the “Temple
Guards,” to arrest Jesus but that too would prove
fruitless, when the guards returned w/o X, being
deeply awed by His teaching.

John says the “Jews” (the Jewish religious leaders) were
astonished at Jesus’ teaching, & were asking where He
had gotten His education.
They knew it hadn’t been in any of the famous rabbis’ schools
there in Jerusalem.
And yet His teaching demonstrated a vast/comprehensive
knowledge of OT Scripture, and a profound understanding
of its truths/meaning.
Moreover, Jesus taught with authority based on who He was, and what He knew—in contrast to the rabbis, whose authority was other rabbis.

E.g., Jesus would simply say, “Verily, verily, I say to you.” Other teachers would say, “According to Rabbi So-&-So…,” and that’s how they would support their own teachings.

Teaching as Jesus taught, rather than relying on rabbinic tradition was frowned upon as the arrogance of an independent spirit who resisted accountability and who considered his own opinion to be of equal value and weight with the words of great rabbis from the past.

The Jewish leaders viewed Him as nothing more than a self-taught, enthusiastic hick from rural Galilee, masquerading as a bonafide expert on Scripture & the Law.

The words “never been educated” reflect a tightly restrictive hierarchy among Judaism’s teachers.

The Talmud said no man could appear as a teacher who had not been properly apprenticed for some years, as a colleague of a recognized rabbi.

So there was a semi-official system in place, by which young rabbis associated themselves with more-experienced, better-known rabbis.
There, they did their time, & earned some credibility by teaching on their own, working their way up the ladder of notoriety. But suddenly this young “upstart” named Jesus, not having bothered w/ the regular system, or paid his dues, was teaching in the temple, competing for students against well-established teachers. Jealous rabbis felt He needed to get in line, & wait His turn. They were esp. infuriated that He was such an amazingly good teacher, that many came to hear Him speak. People had never heard anything like His teaching before. So, serious students of the Word were drawn to Him. He attracted the best students, whom all the other rabbis wanted. 

**Even “the Jews” (the Jewish religious leaders) were astonished by Jesus’ teaching.**

This would lead us to believe that their asking, “*How has this man become learned,*” wasn’t really an honest question. They were simply trying to undermine Jesus’ credibility as a teacher, insinuating that, because He hadn’t been trained by any of the recognized rabbis, He didn’t deserve a hearing, & people shouldn’t listen to anything He had to say.
It must have been frustrating, not being able to refute Jesus’ teaching or even cope w/ it, in an intellectually honest way.

They could only raise questions about His educational pedigree.

They certainly did not accept His claims about Himself.

**Jesus had always astonished people with His teaching.**

* It had started right here in the Temple when He was only a 12 year old prodigy.

Luke says Mary/Joseph found Him sitting there w/ recognized teachers all around Him.

He goes on to say=> “*All who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers*” (Lk 2:47).

* After Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, Matthew says=>

  “*The crowds were amazed at His teaching; / for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes*” (Mt 7:28-29).

His interpretation of OT Scripture was making sense, & He wasn’t bothering to quote any other rabbis, in order to support/buttress it.

* In Mt 13:54 we read that, after He taught in His hometown synagogue at Nazareth=> “*They were astonished, and said, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom.’*”

They had watched Him grow up, and knew He’d had no opportunity for private tutoring from a famous rabbi.
* Mark 1 says the same thing happened in the synagogue at Capernaum=> “They were amazed at His teaching” (1:22).

Jesus had received no formal training, and yet He had an astonishing command/understanding of OT Law, and a mastery of OT Scripture.

* **Jesus’ Answer**

[Verse 16]=> “So [because they’d asked the question about His education] Jesus answered them and said, ‘My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.’”

**Jesus answers in essence**=> “I am not just spouting my own opinions. I’ve been trained by God Himself—who has also sent Me.”

Talk about your name-dropping!

Someone: Maybe they didn’t realize Jesus was talking about God, His Heavenly Father, when He mentioned “Him who sent Me.”

Of course they did—X had repeatedly used that phrase, & often mentioned God the Father as the One who had sent Him.

* E.g. Jn 5:36 (Jesus)=> “The works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

* Jn 6=> “All will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (6:23-24).

I wish I could convey to you how absolutely shocking that would have sounded to a 1st century Jew.
They knew X was claiming that His teachings came directly from God the Father.

The Jews to whom Jesus was speaking did not have a well developed concept/theology of the Trinity—the Father/Son/H.S. All they knew about was the Lord God. They focused on the unity of God, continually reciting the Shemah—“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!” (Deut 6:4).

Monotheism began w/ the Jews—it was in their blood & at the core of all that they believed. They never talked about a Trinity—which was only vaguely alluded to in the OT, in texts such as Psa 2. You don’t find much about the Trinity in the OT.

So Jesus was not only introducing them to the concept of the Trinity, He was teaching them that He Himself was the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the Son of God. These were colossal new concepts for these monotheistic Jewish people to digest and assimilate.

He was also telling them that the 1st Person of the Godhead, (His Heavenly Father) had been His teacher. So His teachings originated w/ what God the Father had taught Him, & were therefore God’s truth. His words were the Father’s words, not His own opinions.
In Jn 12, X will say=> "The things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me" (12:50).

When Jesus spoke, the Father was speaking thru His Son.

If anyone among the Jewish people hadn’t been astonished by Jesus’ words up till now, this must have done it.

More than that, Jesus’ words had placed them on the horns of a dilemma.

* Either they had to believe Him, & treat His words as God’s own words;
* Or they had to reject Him as a terrible fraud, and everything He had taught as a blasphemous lie—heresy.

If they chose the latter course, & it turned out that what Jesus had said was all true, they would be guilty of rejecting God’s own words.

The stakes couldn’t have been higher, because Jesus had also said=> "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (Jn 5:24).

Believing Jesus’ words was the way to avoid divine judgment.

Jesus was insisting that He was no inventive, self-appointed upstart, but One instructed by God, and sent by God, bearing God’s own message.
That being the case, we, like those people to whom Jesus first made these statements, should receive His words w/ great reverence, thoughtfully contemplating every syllable that fell from His divine lips.

**Somehow, before Jesus was 12, God the Father had begun to communicate w/ X, in His humanness/manhood, instructing Him.**

He wasn’t born w/ a full-blown seminary education already in His head.

We know that, because Lk 2 says after the account of His experience in the Temple at age 12=>

“*Jesus kept increasing in wisdom*” (Lk 2:52).

If Jesus was “increasing in wisdom,” He was experiencing a learning curve just as all human beings do.

And His learning curve was so steep, that He had amazed biblical scholars w/ it, when He was still only a 12 year old.

But that was because He had an excellent Teacher—God the Father.

**Q:** If every word Jesus spoke was God’s truth that can save a person’s soul, why didn’t everyone listen to Him?

The answer to that is found in Roman’s 1, which says that sinful men suppress the truth in their unrighteousness (1:18).

I.e., they are unwilling to listen to it and learn it.

Verse 21 adds=> “*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in*
their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

Why would man choose foolish/futile speculation over
God-given truth, that could have saved his soul?

Why would he prevent himself from even learning the truth
but instead, adopting an entrenched attitude of
resistance/unwillingness?

Ans: Because he does not like the God of the Bible, so he
reinvents Him, creating for himself a false god.

I.e., men do not honor the true God as their God, but reject
Him, and follow their own desires, as if they were
gods themselves.

They are militantly unwilling to yield to God’s will, but
want to impose their own will on Him/His-will.

Jesus says in our own text=> “If anyone is willing to
do His will, he will know of the teaching,
whether it is of God.”

Sadly, most people are unwilling to do God’s will.

Those words mean people like this will never know
Jesus/His-teaching, & will never become saved,
until they become willing.

They reject Jesus’ God, & substitute for Him another god
who dotes on them, like a senile/sentimental
grandfather.

They rob the true God of His deity/sovereignty.
They make Him less than the Lord of lords & King of kings & subjugate Him under their own thumbs, lest they give Him too much freedom, & He forget His obligation to do the will of His creatures. Their god is not the God of Scripture who orders all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph 1:11).

*The Evidence* (which proves that what Jesus said is from God and not from Himself)

**Jesus offers 2 lines of proof, one that involves a realization about His teaching by willing listeners; and one that involves His own motive for teaching.**

Proof #1—The realization of willing listeners to His teaching Anyone whose will is submitted to the Father’s will, is going to realize that everything X taught came from God Himself. It will ring true to his heart/mind.

**[Verse 17] (Jesus)⇒** "If anyone is willing to do His [God’s] will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself."

Anyone who willingly obeys God, humbly yielding to God’s will, is going to discern that everything Jesus taught was absolutely true, because every word Jesus spoke was truth direct from God.

As Jesus said in Jn 15:26, the H.S. (who is "the Spirit of truth...from the Father") will testify to that person’s heart that Jesus spoke/acted on the Father’s behalf.
Having humbled his own heart before God’s Word to obey it, he’ll know w/i himself that God’s will, (which he’s committed to obey) is expressed in Jesus’ teaching.

How will he know these things?

1st, the H.S. will confirm them to his heart.

I Cor 2=> “We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God” (I Cor 2:12).

2nd, it will be proven to his mind through the Word.

The Word is a living/active/sharp/2-edged sword.

He’ll read in it what Jesus said/did in this world and it will cut deep.

He’ll read that X said (Jn 10:37f), “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; / but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

Under the influence of the H.S., he will read these truths in God’s Word, he’ll become convinced by them, and he’ll come to believe in X through them.

Those who willingly/sincerely seek the truth of God will discover/believe the truth about Jesus in God’s Word.

But it all must begin w/ harmony between man’s-will and God’s-will, man willingly submitting to God’s will.
In Jn 3:21, X said=> “*He who practices* [willingly] the truth comes to the Light,” and having gained new light, he practices the truth all the more obediently.

Living up to the light he has already received, he then receives additional (even greater) light.

So if we were to compare a Xn who knows a little about God’s Word, but faithfully practices what he knows, w/ a Xn who knows a lot, but doesn’t practice it, we would prob. find that the one who applies the little he knows, is the better Xn.

He will be the more spiritually enlightened of the two.

He’ll prob. have completed more spiritual life-cycles of willingness, leading to learning, leading to obedience, leading to love for God, leading once again to greater willingness.

W/ each of those cycles, he grows spiritually, and draws closer to God, whom to know aright, is eternal life.

Proof #2—Jesus’ own motive for teaching=> (to glorify God)

[Verse 18] (Jesus)=> “*He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*”

A teacher who teaches his own opinions is motivated by a desire for his own glory.
That was the primary motivation of the scribes/Pharisees, & prob.
also the Jewish leaders who were now attacking Jesus.
In Jn 5:44, X said, “You receive glory from one another.”
They would teach their opinions about the Law, their egos
would get entangled in their opinions, & they would
seek glory from others to validate/vindicate those
opinions & to pamper their pride.
A teacher who is proud of being his own man, speaking his
own mind, has his ego mixed right in w/ his teaching.
Jesus, however, didn’t teach His own opinions—He taught the
truths God the Father had taught Him.
And He taught them in order to honor God, who was their
Source, and who had sent Jesus to teach them.
That was another evidence, that both Jesus & what He
taught were true, which every listener who was
committed to God’s will would be able to recognize.
He was no charlatan, and His teaching was trustworthy
because it was God’s own teaching.
Beyond that, Jesus could claim what no other human
teacher could ever claim, that there is no
unrighteousness in Him at all.
Jesus, being one w/ the Father, is worthy of our worship.
“Taught by God”
February 16, 2014

Text: John 7:14-18

1. The Bible teaches man how to combine the learning of knowledge with love of God for an abundance of life.
   Jn 17:3; Lk 6:40

2. A person who is not willing to trust and obey God can never learn the eternal truth God has, to teach him.
   Jn 17:26

3. Today’s text explains how we are taught by God, and it does so through a question asked of Christ, His answer to that question, and then the evidence that proves His answer is true…

   * The Jews’ Question
   [John 7:14-15]

4. Jesus’ unexpected appearance in the temple caught the Jewish authorities off guard and blocked their plan to arrest Him.

5. Even “the Jews” (the Jewish religious leaders) were astonished by Jesus’ teaching.
   Lk 2:47; Mt 7:28-29; Mt 13:54; Mk 1:22

   * Jesus’ Answer
   [Verse 16]

6. Jesus answers in essence, “I am not just spouting my own opinions. I have been trained by God—who also sent Me.”
   Jn 5:36; 6:23-24; 12:50

7. If anyone had not been astonished by Jesus’ words up till now, this must have done it; more than that, Jesus’ words had placed them on the horns of a dilemma.
   Jn 5:24; Lk 2:52

8. If every word Jesus spoke was God’s truth that can save a person’s soul, why didn’t everyone listen to Him? Sinful men suppress the truth in their unrighteousness.
   Rom 1:18, 21; Eph 1:11
* The Evidence
Jesus offers two lines of proof…

9. Proof #1—The reaction of [16 willing] listeners to His teaching

[Verse 17]

Jn 15:26; I Cor 2:12; Jn 10:37-38

10. Those who willingly and sincerely seek the truth of God will
discover and believe the truth about [12 Jesus] in God’s Word.

Jn 3:21

11. Proof #2—Jesus’ own [14 motive] for teaching

[Verse 18]

Jn 5:44

12. Jesus taught in order to honor [8 God].

13. Jesus, being one with the Father, is [14 worthy] of our worship.