



# What it means to Know God



# Introduction

We acknowledged at the very beginning of this series that competing worldviews related to the existence and knowability of God contend for the hearts of all people – including yours and mine. We have argued that while God is incomprehensible, He is also knowable, though never exhaustively. In examining the subject of epistemology, we came to understand that our knowledge may be derived from sensual data (seeing, hearing, etc.), investigation (science), intuition, reason, *and* revelation. And, we noted, whatever knowledge we have accumulated during our lifetimes could never remain only in the realm of our minds and reason but would necessarily shape our behavior and actions. Thus, noted Oxford professor, Simon Blackburn: “There is no limit to the size of catastrophe that acting on a false belief can bring about.”

# Introduction

Having considered some of the most important theological and philosophical foundational issues surrounding the subject of *knowing God*, it is now time to turn our attention to the question many of you have had – perhaps for many years: How can I ***truly know Him***? “Well and good,” you say, “that God’s self-disclosure has come to us in natural revelation, through the Word of God written, and by the Word of God incarnate. But,” you might be thinking, “I just can’t seem to connect with the Lord. I can’t see Him or hear His voice, and the Scriptures can seem very dry to me. Please give me some counsel that would offer me hope that God not only exists, but that I can truly have a personal relationship with Him. John, that is my primary concern.”

# Let's Begin With Jeremiah

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that **he understands and knows me**, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord’” (Jer. 9:23-24).



# It's More Than Knowing *About* God

“How can we turn our knowledge *about* God into knowledge *of* God? The rule for doing this is demanding, but simple. It is that we turn each truth that we learn *about* God into matter for meditation *before* God. We have some idea, perhaps, what prayer is, but what is meditation?...Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God. Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let His truth make its full and proper



# It's More Than Knowing *About* God

impact on one's mind and heart. It is a matter of talking to oneself about God and oneself; it is, indeed, often a matter of arguing with oneself, reasoning oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief into a clear apprehension of God's power and grace. Its effect is ever to humble us, as we contemplate God's greatness and glory, and our own littleness and sinfulness, and to encourage and reassure us – 'comfort' us, in the old, strong, Bible sense of the word – as we contemplate the unsearchable riches of divine mercy displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ."

- J.I. Packer



# Is This What You Are Longing For?

“The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.”

- A.W. Tozer

# Cries Of The Heart

- “Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!” (Job 23:3).
- “Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord” (Hos. 6:3).
- “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Ps. 100:1-3).
- “Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart!” (Ps. 36:10).



“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of  
the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

Hab. 2:14



# But You Can't Have Him If...

- You believe He can be found in programs
- You believe everything must be left up to Him
- You believe He can be found by belonging to an organization
- You believe keeping busy will lead you to Him
- You want His hands (His gifts) more than His heart (Him)
- You are living in unconfessed, unrepentant sin
- You are not dealing with the idols in your life
- You are unwilling to seek Him with your whole heart

# Be Aware That Not Everyone Knows The Lord

- “But Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord , that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? **I do not know the Lord**, and moreover, I will not let Israel go’” (Ex. 5:2).
- “Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. **They did not know the Lord**” (I Sam. 2:12).
- “Now **Samuel did not yet know the Lord**, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him” (I Sam. 3:7).
- “I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though **you do not know me**” (Is. 45:5).

# It's True: God Initiates With His Love

- “Then the word of the Lord came to me: ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: “Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart””’ (Jer. 24:4-7).
- “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (I Jn. 4:10). “We love, because He first loved us” (I Jn. 4:19).

# What We Can Know About God With Certainty

- “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth” (Job 19:25).
- “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2).
- “By this I know that you delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me” (Ps. 41:11).
- “This I know, that God is for me” (Ps. 56:9b; cf. Rom. 8:31).
- “I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me” (Ps. 119:75).



# What We Can Know About God With Certainty

- “For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods” (Ps. 135:5).
- “I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy” (Ps. 140:12).
- “I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him” (Eccl. 3:14).
- “I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord” (Hos. 2:20).

# What We Can Know About God With Certainty

- “You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame” (Joel 2:27).
- “...for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster” (Jonah 4:2).
- “For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 13:3).
- “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations” (Ps. 67:1-2).